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GODLY UNION AND CONCORD.



# GODLY UNION AND CONCORD

SERMONS PREACHED. MAINLY IN  
WESTMINSTER ABBEY IN THE INTEREST  
OF CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY.

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# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	i—xlvii
NO.	
1. THE UNCHANGING FAITH . . . . .	I
<i>Westminster Abbey, January 6th, 1901.</i>	
2. THE PARADOX OF CHRISTIANITY . . . . .	16
<i>Westminster Abbey, January 13th, 1901.</i>	
3. CHRISTIAN VERSATILITY . . . . .	30
<i>Westminster Abbey, January 20th, 1901.</i>	
4. APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY . . . . .	45
<i>St. Margaret's, Westminster, June 30th, 1901.</i>	
5. APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, I. . . . .	55
<i>St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 7th, 1901.</i>	
6. APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, II. . . . .	67
<i>St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 14th, 1901.</i>	
7. APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, III. . . . .	79
<i>St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 21st, 1901.</i>	
8. APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, IV. . . . .	90
<i>St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 28th, 1901.</i>	
9. APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, V. . . . .	101
<i>St. Margaret's, Westminster, August 4th, 1901.</i>	
10. CHURCH CONGRESS SERMON . . . . .	113
<i>All Saints, Hove, September 29th, 1901.</i>	

NO.		PAGE
11.	AN APPEAL FOR UNITY <i>Cambridge, October 20th, 1901.</i>	126
12.	THE CHURCH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE <i>Westminster Abbey, November 1st, 1901.</i>	144
13.	CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT <i>Westminster Abbey, November 3rd, 1901.</i>	153
14.	CHRIST'S MISSION IN THE CHURCH <i>Westminster Abbey, November 10th, 1901.</i>	166
15.	PROSELYTISING <i>Westminster Abbey, November 17th, 1901.</i>	181
16.	SUPERSTITION. <i>Westminster Abbey, November 24th, 1901.</i>	194
17.	THE JUDGMENT OF CHRIST <i>Westminster Abbey, December 1st, 1901.</i>	209
18.	THE BIBLE <i>Westminster Abbey, December 8th, 1901.</i>	224
19.	APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION <i>Westminster Abbey, December 15th, 1901.</i>	239
20.	HOLY COMMUNION <i>Westminster Abbey, December 22nd, 1901.</i>	254
21.	DISCIPLESHIP <i>Westminster Abbey, December 29th, 1901.</i>	269

# INTRODUCTION

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## I.

IT will be impertinent, and I think also superfluous, to preface this volume with anything of the nature of a personal apology: but I hold myself bound to state frankly that, on the particular contention which has attracted most public notice in the sermons here published, viz., the explicit repudiation of the conventional doctrine of Apostolic Succession, I have definitely and deliberately gone back on former declarations of my own. Some ten years ago I wrote a letter to the *Times* protesting against the action of the late Bishop of Worcester in admitting Nonconformists to communion at Grindelwald, and a little later I wrote to the *Guardian* criticising a sermon of Archdeacon Sinclair which advocated a recognition of the non-episcopal Churches. I hold myself bound to draw public attention to the fact that I have come to think that I was wrong, and Bishop Perowne and Archdeacon Sinclair right on those issues. One of the wisest and best men I know once gave me this counsel, which at the time, and often since, has been of much service to me, "never waste your soul in bewailing the blunders that you made honestly when trying to do right." Therefore, while I regret giving.



undeserved pain to any one, I do not regret action which was, so far as I can judge myself, honestly directed to what I conceived to be my duty.

It is now six years since I found myself unable to proceed on the old assumption: and set myself to use the comparative leisure, which, as incumbent of S. Mary's Hospital, Ilford, I possessed, to examine, as thoroughly as I could, the whole question of the nature and organisation of the Christian Church. The course of public events held me to the subject; I followed closely the movement for securing a papal recognition of Anglican Orders; I read the tragedy of Dreyfus, not merely in the English journals, but also in the columns of the clerical press in France; I was interested deeply in the "crisis" in the Church. Everywhere I was being forced back on the question of the Christian ministry, its origin, nature, history, moral worth, actual influence.

The religious anarchy which reigns in England had always troubled me: perhaps the circumstances of my ministerial life have compelled me beyond my fellows to realise its miserable consequences. When, in 1888, at the urgent request of the late Bishop of Colchester, and with the warmly expressed approval of the late Bishop of S. Alban's, I left the Oxford House for the Vicarage of Barking, I found myself in a mad world. Christianity, which was certainly not strongly established in the life of the people, was represented by the following organisations:—

1. The Church of England.
2. The Roman Catholic Church.
3. The Methodists.

## SECTARIANISM.

4. The Wesleyans.
5. The Congregationalists.
6. The General Baptists.
7. The Strict Baptists.
8. The Open Plymouth Brethren.
9. The Close Plymouth Brethren.
10. The Salvation Army.
11. Private Venture Unsectarian Missions.
12. The Peculiar People.
13. Quaker Mission.

There were other merely individual ventures, but those I have named were organised and fairly permanent bodies. The religious result was ruinous.\* I say now, after an interval of years, what I said at the time, that this demented sectarianism had gone far to destroy the moral force of Christianity in the place. I am not writing a personal apologia, or I should have much to say of efforts made, and experiments tried, to find some remedy. It must suffice to say broadly and briefly that the conviction which, through conflict and failure, was formed in my mind, and finally fixed itself, was hostile to the common and obvious method of asserting the exclusive Divine Right of the hierarchy, and fastened itself on the recovery and reassertion of the Church of Christ as essentially the organised society of His disciples.

I have made no secret of my conviction. In 1897 I published a volume of "historical and social sermons to general congregations,"<sup>1</sup> in which the direction of my thought was sufficiently indicated.

\* <sup>1</sup> *Light and Leaven*, Methuen & Co., 1897.

"The evidence of Christian history," I said, "would seem to be fatal to all rigid doctrines of an external unity. Manifestly the graces of God have not respected ecclesiastical theories. Heretics like Ulphilas have been as effectual in the mission-field as their orthodox contemporaries; schismatics (and, indeed, heretics also), such as, on the modern Roman doctrine, were the Irish missionaries, were none the less abundantly blessed in their labours. In our own day no evangelistic efforts have been more heroic and more successful than those of the Presbyterians. Moreover, it is manifest that saintliness cannot be cooped up within any ecclesiastical limits. Some systems may favour one type of moral excellence, and some another, but all Christian systems have proved themselves capable of producing types of character which can be rightly called saintly. The most arrogant and the most futile of all ecclesiastical pretensions is that which would claim for any church a monopoly of saints. \* \* \* In condemning exclusive theories of church unity, Christian history establishes a unity of another kind. Christianity certifies its Divine character, not in the political sphere, by the miracle of an immutable institution, but in the moral sphere, by the various but accordant testimony of saintly lives."<sup>1</sup>

A year later, in 1898, I published another volume, *Apostolic Christianity*,<sup>2</sup> in which I spoke with a clearness which ought to have prevented any misconception of my

<sup>1</sup> *l. c.*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Apostolic Christianity: Notes and Inferences mainly based on S. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians.* Methuen & Co. 1898.

## SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES.

position. I shall make no scruple of transcribing the substance of the appendix on apostolic succession, because I can find no more apposite words to express my present belief on that subject.

“It can hardly be disputed by any well-informed student that the conventional Anglican teaching about the apostolic succession is in many respects gravely objectionable. It states boldly as a fact what is at best a probable supposition, and it is made to carry the burden of practical inferences so serious that nothing but the clearest and most convincing proofs could sufficiently commend them to the acceptance of thoughtful Christians. It ought to be admitted that in its crude traditional form the doctrine of apostolic succession is subsequent to the apostolic age. Only with very large deductions can we allow the truth of the familiar Ember-tide hymn :—

“•His twelve Apostles first He made  
His ministers of grace,  
And they their hands on others laid  
To fill in turn their place.”

“For the Apostles, strictly speaking, had no successors. Their functions were unique and incommunicable. In a more general sense the Christian ministry, however designated or organised, stands in the apostolic succession. The crucial question is, Have we any sufficient grounds for pleading apostolic authority in its extremest, most obligatory shape for that type of ecclesiastical order which we now call Episcopal? That the threefold ministry can be traced in a continuous line to Apostolic times is now generally admitted: that any

other type of ecclesiastical order can be so traced may be securely denied; but though these facts do undoubtedly confer on the Episcopal *régime* a prestige, a value, and an interest which are unique, can it be reasonably maintained that they justify the rigid and tremendous conclusion that non-episcopal ministers are necessarily invalid? Since it is certain that the threefold ministry is not absolutely coeval with the Church, and since it is admittedly not based on any known commandment of Christ, can it be justly claimed that now the threefold ministry belongs to the 'esse' of the Church?

"These questions seem equally difficult and important. For the higher the theory of the Church the greater must be the authority of its permanent agreements, and the threefold ministry certainly represents one of the most permanent of all such agreements. The divine right of the ministry as certified by the episcopal succession, from the apostles was never questioned from the second century to the sixteenth. It would seem that to abandon a system so long standing could hardly fail to involve the gravest spiritual consequences. But the commentary of nearly four centuries on the Reformation does not seem to correspond with the requirements of the rigid episcopal theory. Christianity, it is contended, has been most apostolic outside the apostolic succession, most Christian outside the sphere of sacramental grace. This is an exaggeration of facts which, exaggeration apart, must be faced.

"There is, of course, another side to the question. The witness of the last four centuries is by no means

uniformly favourable to 'Protestantism.' Ecclesiastical anarchy is seen to have evils of its own scarcely less baleful than those of hierarchic absolutism. The decay of the Christian character through sectarian competition and conflict is hardly less ruinous than the debasement of the Christian life by ignorance and superstition. But this must be allowed. The evils of Protestant anarchy are very generally admitted, and are on the way to be overcome. The nineteenth century is more united and charitable than the seventeenth; but the evils of absolutism, at least so far as the Roman Church represents absolutism, seem to grow more inveterate and baleful. The Christianity of Southern Europe and Southern America is perhaps less intellectual and moral to-day than in the seventeenth century. On the whole view of the last four centuries, I think it must be admitted that non-episcopalian Christianity has proved its power to stand the moral test of discipleship proposed by our Lord at least as well as episcopalian. Its 'fruits,' religious, social, political, intellectual, are indisputable. We are then driven to ask, How far shall all this affect our doctrine of apostolic succession? Is the 'witness of history' valid up to the sixteenth century and not beyond? Is the development of the Christian Ecclesia to be arbitrarily arrested at the second century or the fourth? The Roman Church seems to stand for a truth when she answers in the negative these questions, though her arbitrary application of the truth she admits robs her admission of practical result. At all hazards it would seem that a living belief in the Church, as a divinely-inspired society, must require a

willingness to revise past conclusions by present experience. It seems involved in the conviction that the Holy Spirit is continuously present in the Church, that we should give the greatest importance to the latest Christian experience. For that must be supposed to reflect His most recent guidance. Definitions must be adequate if they are to be received as true. The strict conventional episcopalian definition of the Church is ceasing to be adequate: the probability is that within a few generations it will become as patently inadequate as the kindred Roman definition. Probably, however, both definitions are rather lightly held. Men may be illogical, they are rarely in large numbers consciously absurd."

When, at the end of 1899, I resigned the Rural Deanery of South Barking, I published and presented as a parting gift to the clergy of the deanery, another volume of sermons,<sup>1</sup> in which I again expressed my thoughts with the utmost clearness on Church questions: and when I left Ilford for Westminster in December, 1900, I printed and presented to my congregation and other friends two lectures on Dissent in England, which, whatever other defects they may have possessed, did not lie open to the charge of obscurity.

It will be sufficiently clear that the teaching of the sermons published in this volume represents no sudden and recent change of mind, but a continuous movement of thought in one direction. I have, of course, no right to complain if my books are not read: but I have every

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Rem: Thoughts for Critical Times in the Church.* Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co.

reason to complain, when those who have not read my books accuse me of something very near akin to a breach of faith, for teaching in Westminster the same doctrines that I have publicly advocated, by every means in my power, for years past.

## II.

The recovery of fraternity among Christians is no matter merely of amiable sentiment, but of urgent practical importance. It is sufficient to point to three questions, which already hold a prominent place in public regard, and which are surely destined to loom more largely than any others on the national horizon—education, poverty, foreign missions.

I. We stand on the eve of a momentous decision with respect to our national education. The long-drawn-out agony of the voluntary schools visibly approaches its term. Many of those schools must perish within the next few years, for quite intelligible reasons, because, speaking broadly, they are educationally (I use the word in its current meaning) inferior. They are worse housed, worse equipped, worse staffed than the board schools, and no device can save them which attempts to retain their voluntary character. But, none the less, these starved and failing schools embody the true principle of education, the only principle which thoughtful Christian men can, in the long run, accept, the principle that the basis and pervading tone of a sound educational system must be Christian. It is not a question of doing justice to the religious teaching in this or that board school.



We all know that many board school teachers are excellent Christians, whose influence on the children is, in the best sense of the word, 'religious'. In the long run a non-Christian system will become an anti-Christian system, and the teachers will inevitably reflect its spirit. I believe there are very manifest signs that the tone of the teachers is altering for the worse, and I believe also that, unless the process can be arrested, we shall, by the steady pressure of circumstances, find ourselves landed in a system of secular education pure and simple. We are, as a nation, at the parting of the ways. The fate of the voluntary schools will determine the issue one way or the other. If, on the one hand, this miserable dual system is to continue, the voluntary schools will perish ignobly, one after the other, dying of inanition and the inefficiency which inanition compels, and the system which survives unrivalled will be essentially a secular system. If, on the other hand, our national education is at last to be unified, and the voluntary schools are to be absorbed into the general system without friction and without injustice, because the essential principle which those schools assert, as distinct from denominational interests which they have incidentally served, has at last established itself in our national education, then a new and brighter epoch will have begun.

What is the real difficulty in the way? The answer is evident. The insensate jealousies and conflicts of the Churches will not admit of a Christian system of education. There is not a Christian parent, in any of those Churches, who would tolerate a non-religious

## POVERTY.

upbringing for his own children; and his acquiescence in a non-religious system of national education is always conditioned in his own mind by the supposition that at home or in Sunday School the religious element can be supplied. But any reasonable man, who will face the facts, knows that in the case of great multitudes of children that vital supposition cannot be made, and that, if the elementary schools do not provide some moral teaching based on the Christian faith, the masses of our poorest children will grow up morally undeveloped, to be the danger and scandal of society. In view of so urgent a matter, is it wholly vain to hope that Christian men, as such, will seize the present opportunity for not merely terminating an illogical and now impracticable compromise, but also for placing the national education on a frankly Christian basis?

2. Of the problem of poverty we shall hear much as soon as the war is over. Messrs. Charles Booth and Rowntree have drawn a frightful indictment of the Churches, not by sensational rhetoric, but by prosaic and cruelly accurate statistics. How is any escape to be found from so grievous a situation as this in which, amid abounding wealth and shameless luxury, more than one-fourth of the nation is oppressed with literal hunger? The only chance of any solution of the problem which shall not plunge society itself into the unimaginable disasters of revolution, lies in the concentration of the public conscience on the facts, and, as a consequence, in the sustained application of civic efforts to the task of social improvement. The first step to these ends is the unification of the forces of religion in the country,

that is, in short, what I plead for in these sermons, the recovery of fraternity among Christians.

3. Of foreign missions—the Christianity of the empire—what need to speak? Christian divisions nowhere have a more wanton and repulsive aspect than in the mission field, where they paralyze the labours of the missionaries, contradict their message, and move the scorn of the heathen.

Is it not pitiable that at such a time as this the bishops of the English Church should meet in conference, time after time, to consider, not the recovery of Christian fraternity, but “the ritual question”? Their lordships are but the most conspicuous victims of the universal madness.

We come back to the question, then, What is at the root of these obstinate divisions? Is there any chronic obstacle to fraternity which bars all progress towards a happier state? Why cannot good men, who hold the same faith, confess allegiance to the same Lord, recognise the obligation of the same moral law, revere the same Scriptures, acknowledge one another frankly as fellow-disciples, and work together in the common cause?

The answer must certainly include the admission that the exclusive claims of types of ecclesiastical order constitute, as matters now stand in England, the most obdurate and general stumbling-block in the way of peace. There are two such claims being pressed among us—the claim of a Divine-right papacy, and the claim of a Divine-right episcopate. Both have their roots in the same assumptions: both justify themselves by the

same plea of development: both necessitate the same exclusive attitude towards all fellow Christians who reject them: both are open to the same objections from the standpoint of the historical student: both are equally repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel.

Their exclusive claims being set aside, and their title to Christian acceptance being brought to the true and reasonable test of utility, it cannot be denied that both these types of ecclesiastical organisation have strong recommendations. As an episcopalian, I may be allowed to believe that the episcopal system will approve itself in the future, as in the past, to be the best adapted for Christian uses: but I am very sure that nothing could so hinder the general recognition of the fact, as the narrow, exclusive attitude now generally adopted by the advocates of episcopacy.

I believe the time is ripe for a re-examination of our doctrine of the Christian ministry. Within the last few years a great and salutary change has passed over Anglican opinion with respect to the Holy Scriptures. The traditional doctrine has been generally set aside in deference to the teachings of biblical science. Is it too much to hope that a similar change of attitude may be effected with respect to the traditional doctrine of the Church? Dr. Hort, in one of his letters, makes an observation which few serious students of ecclesiastical history will be disposed to dispute: "Hooker's great service was to break down the Genevan theory as to the nature of the authority of Scripture in all Church matters. Much of what he said of the authority of the ancient Church seems to me to rest on a precisely analogous

but still more untenable theory.”<sup>1</sup> If we were faced, as former generations believed themselves to be, by a clear, and indisputable Divine ordinance, when we consider the episcopal government, then for devout Christians there would be nothing more to say. We should have to reconcile, as best we could, the astounding facts of contemporary Christendom, and acquiesce, with whatever violence to our own hearts, in excluding from Christian fellowship one-third of the Christian family. But if there be no such clear and indisputable Divine ordinance, and only a gradual evolution of a system, under the influence of normal forces visibly at work still, then, indeed, we lie under no such necessity, but may consider with open minds the eloquent testimonies of contemporary experience. My contention is nothing else than this. The evidence of the first ages is inconclusive: we are left free to learn the lessons of the latest. The verdict of the history of the past authorises us to inquire further of the history of the present. The matter is of such importance that I may be excused a short discussion of the historical argument. I shall add a few observations on Dr. Moberly’s *Ministerial Priesthood*, in recognition of the fact that many persons have pressed that book on my notice.

### III.

Let me observe, as a preliminary caution, that there are two ways in which the scanty evidence of the sub-apostolic age may be interpreted. You may work

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 435.

## EPISCOPAL GOVERNMENT. xvi

forwards from the New Testament, that is, the original literature of the Christian society, and trace in the history the working out of the primitive principles and ideas : or you may adopt an ecclesiastical theory, whether episcopal or some other, and interpret the history by its guidance, that is, in accordance with its requirements. It has been maintained that the latter is a legitimate, if not a necessary method, that the provisional adoption of a theory is a serviceable mode, if not, even an inevitable condition, of historic research, and that it is borne out by the well-known procedure of scientific students. This might be conceded, perhaps, if the theory were really treated as provisional, and frankly surrendered when found to be inadequate : but in actual experience this is hardly ever the case. I confess, therefore, that I regard with great suspicion this alleged analogy between history and natural science. In the case of the student of physical science, the adoption of a hypothesis may be a necessary means of marshalling and appreciating phenomena, and since the affections are not engaged in the result, no risks to the mental process need be apprehended ; in the case of the ecclesiastical student, however, a similar process will probably tend to deflect the judgment. Principles of interpretation are not working hypotheses merely : they are also, in the religious sphere, bound up with convictions : and they, almost always, draw into the reasoning the subtle and powerful, but irrelevant and sometimes misleading, influence of the emotions. I apprehend that the primary task of the student of history, as well "sacred" as "profane," is to disentangle and arrange his facts : his

*theory must be inferred from the evidence, thus accumulated, marshalled, and appreciated: it must not precede his knowledge of the facts, or prescribe his interpretation of them.* I cannot withhold the statement of my belief that the prevailing Anglican doctrine as to the necessity of the episcopal government is sustained by arguments which conspicuously illustrate the pseudo-scientific method I have described and condemned.

There is yet another preliminary caution which seems requisite. The Christian student must take into consideration the *whole* evidence. The history of the Christian society must not be arbitrarily broken up into sections, when the very question to be answered is the precise testimony yielded by that history. All Christians believe that within the Christian society from the first there has been working the Divine energy of the Holy Ghost. It may serve a legitimate purpose of political convenience to draw a line between one age or state of the Church and another, but that line has no inherent justification, and must not be made the postulate of reasoning. There is no special sanctity in one age which should entitle it to give law to any other. The first four centuries are as little authoritative, and as much, as the last four centuries: their superior importance in some respects is balanced by their inferior importance in others. One age is as "catholic" as any other. These are obvious truths enough, but their bearings are not always remembered. Thus it does not often occur to those who urge us to accept the unanimity of the Church, say, in the fourth century, on the subject of a Divine-right episcopate,

that their argument will apply with equal cogency to later centuries, which have gone back on that unanimity. Of course, I am not arguing that whatever is is right. It is implied in the very notion of an historic revelation, ministered through a visible society, that there should be a tradition of Divine truth, which is, prior to ecclesiastical history, and independent of it. The Christian society can never, without stultifying itself, renounce the ethical ideal of the Gospel, and the didactic norm of the apostolic writings. The positive institutions of the Divine Founder are eternally obligatory, but they are very few. A ministry of discipline and teaching, the two sacraments, a Bible, and perhaps the Lord's Day, seem to exhaust the list. For the rest He left His Church to the guidance of the Holy Ghost in and by the manifold discipline of experience, not in one age only, but in all the ages until the end.

When, with these cautions in mind, we approach the historical argument on which the necessity of episcopal ordination is based, we are at once arrested and amazed at the contrast between the halting and doubtful character of the premisses, and the momentous nature of the positive conclusion. It is no doubt the case that the popular statements of the formal Anglican doctrine give a very different impression, but no one, who has taken the trouble to make himself acquainted with the facts, will dispute my contention. Even those who might without offence be described as the official apologists of the Divine-right episcopate, have wonderfully moderated their language during recent years. The point is important as tending to confirm the view, frequently



expressed in this volume, that the change which has passed over educated opinion on the subject of the origins of the Christian ministry is so considerable as to require a corresponding modification of ecclesiastical theory.

I will illustrate my contention by setting side by side a few statements on the same subject, taken from the writings of two learned and eminent prelates, both bearing the same honoured name, who for more than a generation have enriched the theological thought of the English Church, and added lustre to the episcopal bench. I refer to the two Bishops Wordsworth, the late Bishop of Lincoln, and his son, the present Bishop of Salisbury. My quotations will be taken, in the one case, from the twelfth edition of the well-known theological manual, *Theophilus Anglicanus*, originally published in 1843, and constantly republished since, and to this day included in the list of books recommended in some dioceses for the study of ordination candidates; in the other case, from a learned work, *The Ministry of Grace, Studies in Early Church History with reference to present problems*, which has just issued from the press:—

#### BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

"That there are these Three Orders in the Church, and that a religious community is not *duly* and *fully* a Church without them is evident 'from Scripture and ancient authors' . . . and from the universal primitive and successive *practice* of the Christian Church" (p. 78).

#### BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

"As regards the Ministry, as we know it in practice, the conclusions reached are rather tentative than absolute." They point to a primitive origin for the regular ministry of the Word and sacraments, but to an uneven rate of development in its component orders, and to a

## CONFLICTING AUTHORITIES. 177

longer duration of the charismatic ministry in some regions than in others, as well as to the persistence of the latter as a 'reserve force' latent in the Episcopate. As regards the Episcopate, the facts here stated indicate a general tendency to a monarchical regimen, while they show that it was not everywhere set up in exactly the same form or at the same date. The practical conclusions must surely be: (1) that while some form of regular ministry is always necessary, it need not exclude a charismatic ministry: and (2) that while Episcopacy must be a marked feature of the Church of the future, it need not everywhere have exactly the same relation to the Presbyterate" (Preface, p. vii).

"The Episcopal government of the Church was originally founded in the *person and office* of our Blessed Lord Himself" (p. 86).

"The *universal practice* of the Church of Christ, *from its foundation* for more than *fifteen hundred years without interruption*, shows Episcopacy to be of Divine institution, and to have been regarded by the Church as of inviolable authority" (p. 87).

... During the years A.D. 200-250 we may not only date the final establishment of the monarchical episcopate but also the extension of the minor orders and of the ministry of women, and the beginning of the Church Kalendar" (p. 144).

"It is evidence from these three centres (*i.e.*, Jerusalem, Asia Minor, and Antioch), particularly the explicit evidence of the epistles of S. Ignatius of Antioch, that enables us to accept without reserve, the statement of the preface to our Ordinal that 'from the Apostles'

time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church : Bishops, Priests and Deacons."

"But loyal and thankful acceptance of this statement does not preclude us from observing that in two of the greatest Church centres, closely connected with one another, namely Rome and Alexandria, episcopacy did not grow with the rapidity which marked its progress in Palestine, Syria and Asia" (p. 125).

"There is *no* example of a church without a Bishop for fifteen centuries after Christ" (p. 88).

... At Rome and Alexandria, there were at first only two Orders, the governing order acting nominally as a corporate body or college" (p. 142).

Now, it is not merely the contradiction in statements of fact, which is significant in these extracts: it is far more the altered tone and method reflected in the language. Bishop Wordsworth, writing *thirty-three* years after the publication of Bishop Lightfoot's famous *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*, and taking account of such new materials as the industry of scholars, both at home and abroad, have accumulated in the interval, deliberately reaffirms his conclusions; and those conclusions, the more they are pondered over, are found to be wholly inadequate to sustain the weight of the traditional doctrine of a Divine-right episcopate, itself the necessary channel of sacramental grace. The Bishop of Salisbury himself finds in his "dispassionate study of the evidence," a "practical basis for that reunion between Episcopalians and Presbyterians which

## TRADITION AND SCIENCE. 111

is one of the most obviously necessary tasks of English-speaking Christianity" (p. 142).

I have made special reference to the two Bishops Wordsworth, but the same moral could be pointed by other scholars. It would be worth the while of any careful and intelligent reader to be at the pains of comparing the books written by competent English Churchmen—for obvious reasons the Germans may be left out of count, though, in truth, they are our teachers in historical and critical science—on either side of this question, say Dr. Moberly and Bishop Gore on the one side, and Dr. Hort, Dr. Sanday, and Bishop Lightfoot on the other, and to note the differing handling of the same facts. He will need no further proof of my contention that no positive doctrine, least of all a doctrine of such a character as that here in question, can reasonably be based on so disputable and disputed a foundation.

As with Christian history so with the Scriptures. In the sermon on "Apostolic Succession" I have pointed out the division of authorities as to the evidence of the pastoral epistles. I set in contrast Dr. Liddon as the protagonist of ecclesiastical tradition, and Dr. Hort as the exponent of critical science, and concluded that where, on so comparatively simple an issue, such men differed so widely, it could not be safe, or rational, or charitable to build a doctrine of such formidable character that its acceptance involves the "unchurching" of, perhaps, one-third of the Christians now living on earth. This becomes the more obvious when we remember that the facts and texts in question are neither numerous, nor contested, nor in any extraordinary degree obscure.

In thus comparing the distinguished advocates of the opposed views of the original character of the Christian Ministry, I must not, of course, be supposed to think that their respective arguments are equally sound, and that, in face of their mutual contradiction, a reasonable assurance of the truth is inaccessible to the modern inquirer. On the contrary, I hold most strongly, as indeed is apparent on nearly every page of this book, that the balance decisively inclines in favour of the Cambridge scholars and their allies. Their methods are properly scientific: their reasonings seem to be as free from irrelevant prejudice as it is possible for human reasonings, on subjects connected with religion, to be; their conclusions are, in my belief, sound and probably final. The work of Bishop Gore and Dr. Moberly (to name again the only considerable living English champions of the traditional school) is, marked by extraordinary subtlety of mind, persuasiveness, learning, and obvious sincerity, but, to me at least, it is profoundly unsatisfying.

## IV.

It is manifestly impossible, in the narrow compass of an Introduction, to criticise in detail a book so substantial, and, in many respects, considerable as Dr. Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood*, nevertheless I conceive myself called upon to indicate, however briefly, the reasons why I cannot accept the main contention of that book. In doing this, I disclaim all purpose of passing judgment on the Professor's work as philosopher and theologian. For that task I own myself entirely insufficient. But

the essential issue, as Dr. Moberly himself perceives, is not philosophical, and not theological, but, primarily, historical; and, therefore, as a very humble student of history, I find myself compelled to examine and decisively reject a treatment of evidence which cannot be reconciled, in my judgment, with the accepted principles and procedures of historical science. *Ministerial Priesthood*, to speak quite candidly, seems to me a notable and suggestive example of false method, and its criticism of Bishop Lightfoot's famous Essay, which I reckon a singularly fine example of right method, impresses me as quite curiously perverse.

Dr. Moberly defends his method at length in the prefaces to the first and second editions of his book. I found those prefaces melancholy reading. They preach a doctrine of intellectual impotence, and point the moral of scientific despair. Shrouded in the intricacies of labyrinthine sentences are the confessions of relentless and disqualifying prejudice.

The inevitable and unconscious bias incident to the conditions under which the human mind works is subtly confused with the superfluous and conscious bias of mental presuppositions dictated by theories deliberately adopted. What is true of the first is pleaded in excuse for the last; and in the Teutonic obscurity which marks the author's composition, the unwary reader runs considerable risk of being hopelessly confused. Dr. Moberly is not wholly unconscious of all this, for he repudiates with some warmth the view apparently taken by some readers of his first edition, that it constituted nothing less than "an avowal of incapacity for fair-minded

appreciation of the evidence," and he assures us that *the last thing for which he would plead is "that theological preconceptions, as such, should tyrannise over the interpretation of the text"*; but it is hard to see what other inference can be drawn from such words as these:—

"The cogency of evidence—nay, its whole value and even meaning—depends absolutely on the mental convictions with which we approach it" (p. x).

Or these:—

"I am pleading that the interpretation of the text of the New Testament should be throughout theological, as well as exegetical: or rather that theological beliefs should be recognised as legitimately present in, and for, the exegetical processes" (p. xiv).

Or these:—

"Nevertheless, I must still plead that the reading of history in which great vital facts, like the Incarnate Life, or the nature and meaning of the Church of Christ, are contained, does and must always so essentially depend upon the fundamental convictions of the reader, that for the adequate interpretation of the written history correct mental presuppositions and principles are as indispensable as is a scholarly fidelity to the letter of the text" (p. xvi).

Or these:—

"When I am perfectly certain of my belief in a divinely-ordered church, I am right in taking my certainty with me to the interpretation of passages,

which might otherwise, perhaps, have been explicable without it. If, indeed, the passages in question were incompatible with it, I should have to modify my conception to suit the passages; but if they without it are so far ambiguous, I do, certainly right to interpret them by it" (p. xxvii).

Or these:—

"When we are charged with reading later meanings, unhistorically, into the earlier language of apostles, I am not sure that the charge comes really to more than this—that we are reading the part in the light of the whole, and using the direct outcome of the guided words and guided actions of the Apostolic Church, as a whole, to light up the possible ambiguity of isolated incidents or texts" (p. xxxi).

The best comment on Dr. Moberly's statements of theory is his actual practice: and he himself invokes that test. "I must insist," he says, "that . . . my own book stands or falls, not according to my success or failure in this analysis, but according to its own attempt to give an intelligent, rational, and judicial marshalling and interpretation of the evidence of the actual historical facts" (p. xxi).

In the body of the work, after many pages of theoretical reasoning, we are assured that the vital issue is "after all mainly a question of history" (p. 111), and that "if the theory [*i.e.*, Bishop Lightfoot's] be true as theory, it is on the field of history that it must establish itself" (p. 112). I may assume, then, that in testing



Dr. Moberly's work in the article of his treatment of the evidence, I shall satisfy his own notion of critical equity.

At the start, it is to be observed that Dr. Moberly takes account of very little of the evidence. The epistles of S. Clement of Rome, of S. Ignatius, and of S. Polycarp, and, in a minor degree, the Didache, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the epistle of Barnabas, form the entire basis of his discussion. He makes no reference to the famous passage in S. Jerome, or the well-known case of Alexandria, or the equally well-known statement of Eutychius. Of course, he could not take notice of evidence which has been brought to light quite recently, *e.g.*, the worthlessness of the early episcopal list of Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> the remarkable letter of Severus of Antioch, recently translated from the Syriac, and the more doubtful, though not unimportant, apophthegm of the Egyptian monk Poemen.<sup>2</sup> I do not wish to labour the matter, but I will, shortly, advise any one who really cares to form a just estimate of Dr. Moberly's work to contrast the evidence of which he takes account with that examined by Bishops Lightfoot and Wordsworth in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* article by C. H. Turner in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, July, 1900. "We cannot adduce the succession of Jerusalem as a continuous witness to primitive episcopacy."

<sup>2</sup> These are printed in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, July, 1901, in a note by G. W. Brooks on "The Ordination of the early Bishops of Alexandria." Mr. Brooks remarks with reference to the Letter of Severus: "Here we have a distinct statement, four hundred years before Eutychius, that it was at one time the custom for the Alexandrine presbyters to ordain their Bishops; and as Severus wrote in Egypt, he may be assumed to give the tradition current in the Church of Alexandria in his time."

their respective discussions of the same subject. He will certainly feel that, whatever the value of the Professor's conclusions, they are drawn from a curiously insufficient examination of the facts.

More serious, however, is the treatment of such evidence as he includes in his argument. I will state bluntly that in my judgment Dr. Moberly's use of S. Clement of Rome puts him out of court as a serious historian. So severe an estimate will excuse a careful examination of the point in question.

S. Clement's epistle is, perhaps, the best known, as it certainly is the earliest, of the sub-apostolic writings which have come down to us. It is easily accessible, both in Greek and English, and I would urge every student of "Ministerial Priesthood" to take the trouble of reading it through. He will hardly be prepared for Dr. Moberly's view of the character of that rather commonplace document. He will find that it "is framed on the model of the apostolic epistles, and is mainly taken up with enforcing the duties of meekness, humility, and submission to lawful authority."<sup>1</sup> The object of the letter was to allay certain dissensions in the church at Corinth, and accordingly the writer is led to insist on the necessity of order in every sphere of existence. Dr. Moberly's description creates an uncomfortable suspicion of anachronism, although the actual statements can be, more or less, justified.

"The letter of St. Clement, itself within the first century of our era, is the formal remonstrance of the Church of imperial Rome, addressed under the highest

<sup>1</sup> Salmon : *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 573.

sense of responsibility in a grave ecclesiastical emergency, to the Church of the provincial capital of Achaia. It is difficult to imagine a document, not actually apostolic or inspired, which could take higher rank in respect of authority. Moreover, this solemn remonstrance of the Church of Rome is entirely concerned, from the first page to the last, with a question of ecclesiastical order" (p. 179).

The Greek text, without notes, fills thirty-six pages of Bishop Lightfoot's edition; Dr. Moberly is actually concerned with twelve lines, and even they do not justify his inferences. Dr. Sanday has conveniently printed, as a note to his remarkable sermon on "The Origin of the Ministry," the original passage, together with the ancient Latin version recently discovered by Dom. G. Morin, and an English translation. I reproduce his note as a whole, not merely because of its value for my present purpose, but also because by doing so I direct attention to a small book which has an importance out of all proportion to its size, and which illustrates those principles of historical science which Dr. Moberly ignores or violates on nearly every page of his substantial work.

*Note on Clem. Rom. ad Cor. xliv. 1-3.*

"It is contended that although the doctrine of apostolic succession is not found in the New Testament, it is laid down so explicitly by S. Clement of Rome as to show that the principle must really date from the time of the apostles. The passage in question is as follows. I give the Greek text with the ancient Latin version recently discovered by Dom. G. Morin:—

Καὶ αἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ μὲν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι ἕρις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς. Διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν πρόγνωσιν εὐληφότες τελείαν κατέστησαν τοὺς προθυρημένους, καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομήν ἔδωκαν [οἱ δὲ δώκασι] ὅπως, ἐὰν κοιμηθῶσιν, διαδέχωνται ἑτεροὶ δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν. Τοὺς οὖν κατασταθάντας ὑπ' ἑκείνων ἢ μεταξὺ ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν, συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης, καὶ λειτουργήσαντες ἀμέμπτως τῷ ποιμένι τοῦ Χριστοῦ . . . τούτους οὐ δικαίως νομίζομεν ἀποβάλλεσθαι τῆς λειτουργίας.

ἐπινομήν A Lat. ἐπιδομήν C (cf. Syr.): ἐπιμονήν, adopted by Lightfoot, is a conjecture. The accession of Lat. to the best MS. seems to establish ἐπινομήν.

"Et apostoli nostri scierunt per Dominum nostrum Ihesum Christum, quia contentio erit pro nomine aut episcopatu. Propter hanc causam prudentiam accipientes perpetuam præposuerunt illos supradictos, et postmodum legem dederunt, ut si dormierint, suscipiunt viri alii probati ministerium eorum. Igitur illos constitutos ab illis vel postmodum a quibusdam viris ornatis consentiente aecclesia omne (*sic*), et ministrantes sine querela gregi Christi . . . hos aestimamus non debere eici ab administratione."

"And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. For this cause therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards gave a further injunction that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministrations. Those therefore who were appointed by them, or afterwards by other men of repute,

with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered unblamably to the flock of Christ . . . these men we consider to be unjustly depōsed from their ministration."

"St. Clement is insisting here on the regular and responsible appointment of the Corinthian presbyters. He does not hint in any way at a transmission of powers. The *ἐτεροι ἐλλόγιοι ἄνδρες* are not, as some translations of St. Clement's language might lead us to suppose, placed on the direct line of descent from the Apostles. When we think of the importance of prophecy and the activity of prophets in the Apostolic age, it is very improbable that all who held office or dignity in the Church were appointed to it directly by Apostles in either the wider or the narrower sense. The state of things described by St. Clement is just what would be natural. Nominations to office would be made by an Apostle, if one was available; if not, by those whom the Church most trusted. But in all cases the assent of the Church was required."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Sanday undoubtedly expresses the opinion of every trained historian, and, indeed, of every intelligent reader of S. Clement's words who has no ecclesiastical theory to confuse his judgment. Dr. Moberly himself reminds us that he is not a trained historian; how far his intense conviction of the truth of the traditional episcopal theory has affected his view of the passage before us will be best shown by a few quotations. He tells us that S. Clement maintains "as strongly as it is possible for man to maintain it" the doctrine "that ministerial office depends upon orderly transmission from

<sup>1</sup> *Vide The Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 70-72. Longmans.

those empowered to transmit the authority to ordain—that is, upon a real apostolic succession" (p. 114).

• He paraphrases the argument of the epistle, and on the basis of his summary submits "that it would be difficult to find a stronger assertion than this of the principle that ministerial office is an outward and orderly institution, dependent for its validity upon transmission, continuous and authorized, from the apostles, whose own commission was direct from Jesus Christ" (p. 115).

It is, of course, universally known that S. Clement's epistle is anonymous, and that his authorship, though sufficiently authenticated by the unanimous tradition of the next age, is not anywhere suggested in the document itself. It is characteristic of Dr. Moberly's method that he absolutely ignores these circumstances, and everywhere refers to the epistle in language which would hardly be inadequate if it were an official papal bull. Thus we read on p. 116: "When it is remembered in what position St. Clement stood, and with what tone and claim of authoritative remonstrance he wrote, as the *persona* of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, and again, to what date he and his writing belong, he himself in greater or less degree a companion of apostles, and his letter written as early as the dying years of the first century, very little after—if after—the close of the life of St. John, the significance of this exceedingly strong assertion of the principle of apostolic succession in this earliest of authoritative post-apostolic writings becomes overwhelming indeed. Not Ignatius himself is a stronger witness to 'apostolic succession' than is the Church of Rome in the person of St. Clement."

I may observe in passing that the reference to Ignatius is singularly unfortunate, since that Father, although "his name is inseparably connected with the championship of episcopacy," yet is quite innocent of the later theory "as to the principle on which the episcopate claims allegiance"; "nor is there any approach" in his writings, "even to the language of Irenæus, who, regarding the episcopate as the depositary of the doctrinal tradition of the apostles, lays stress on the apostolic succession as a security for its faithful transmission."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Dr. Moberly himself, when, at a later stage, he treats directly the Ignatian letters, and labours to prove their essential agreement with S. Clement's epistle even in the ecclesiastical system they disclose, comes near to admitting this. "It is only," he says with justice, "as the symbol of unity that the bishop is magnified. If S. Ignatius' expressions are compatible with an episcopally autocratic jurisdiction, they are no less compatible with an episcopacy which wields no jurisdiction save as chairman and symbol of the presbyteral body. Whatever more there was, or was to become, must be looked for elsewhere than in these letters" (p. 200).

But to return to S. Clement. Possessed with the notion that he has found all he wants in the first and best of the apostolic Fathers, Dr. Moberly sets no restraints on his language. The statements steadily grow in definiteness and amplitude until at last the slender basis in the patristic text wholly falls from mind and S. Clement seems to be credited with the matured and rigorous ecclesiastical theory which Dr. Moberly

<sup>1</sup> Vide Bishop Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, Part II., vol. i., p. 396.

evidently believes to be an essential part of the Christian creed. At the risk of being tiresome I must multiply quotations. If I weary my readers, I shall at least secure their confidence. We learn that "the solemn remonstrance of the Roman with the Corinthian Christians turned upon the question of apostolic and continuous transmission of ministry" (p. 124); that "the massive authority of the Church of Rome, speaking within the first century in the person of S. Clement, makes sufficiently clear to us the meaning of the principle, which since the days of S. Clement has never been successfully challenged in the Church—the principle, namely, that ministerial validity is provided for, on the human and material side, and in that sense is dependent upon, a continuity of orderly appointment and institution, received in each generation from those who themselves had been authorized to institute by the institution of those before them; that is, on analysis, by uninterrupted transmission of authority from the men whose own title to authority was that they too were 'Apostles' 'sent' by Him Who, even Himself, was 'sent' to be the Christ" (p. 125). I have transcribed the whole passage as an excellent example of Dr. Moberly's style, and what I can only call the inveterate anachronistic habit of his thought. In a subsequent chapter we are reminded again of "St. Clement's extreme insistence upon the principle of subordination to ministerial authority, or upon the principle of orderly succession of appointment from the apostles as constitutive of ministry" (p. 182); that "there is nothing which St. Clement emphasises more than the appeal to



apostolic order, based upon apostolical succession;” that “his theory of apostolic devolution, as the essential condition of any authorised ministry, is too definite and too peremptory to admit of” Bishop Lightfoot’s theory as to the origin of the episcopate (p. 185); that “the first principle of the Church in St. Clement’s day was that the one essential condition of any lawful ministry was delegation, by orderly succession, from the apostles” (p. 189); that “in the Roman letter of S. Clement” is set forth “a stringent theory of apostolic devolution and succession” (p. 197). Now let any impartial man turn back to Dr. Sanday’s note quoted above, and read again the actual words of S. Clement and the professor’s comments on them, and then contrast the extravagant language of Dr. Moberly. He cannot escape the conclusion that, however eminent in other spheres, Dr. Moberly is constitutionally unable to appreciate historic evidence. I will not examine the remarkable argument, which is evidently advanced in good faith, that since Ignatius wrote in courteous and even flattering terms to the Roman Church, therefore that Church must have satisfied his conception of ecclesiastical order, *i.e.*, been episcopally governed. The inference would be sound enough in the case of a rigid Anglican of the twentieth century, therefore it may be assumed to be equally sound in the case of a bishop of the second! So satisfied is Dr. Moberly with “the uncompromising theory of episcopal succession in the letter of Clement” (p. 218), that he effects a complete reversal of the generally accepted standpoint from which the evidence of the apostolic age is judged. He explains away the

episcopal position of S. James in Jerusalem, because to admit it might seem to concede the principle of evolution from the presbyterate (*vide* pp. 149, 150). The more doubtful cases of Timothy and Titus are magnified far beyond the evidence, because these "apostolic delegates" seem to embody the cardinal principle of devolution (*vide* pp. 151 f.). The importance of the Didache is belittled beyond all reason, because it presents a view of the Church which is not easily reconcilable with the clear-cut theory which is rooted in the Professor's conviction. The really vital question of the character and range of the apostolate in the apostolic Church is totally ignored in the argument, and dismissed contemptuously in a note (p. 136), because Dr. Moberly's central thesis depends on an arbitrary and rigid view of the apostolic office, which that question tends to traverse. Everywhere the New Testament is used in a thoroughly obsolete fashion, and although on a trivial point Dr. Hort's *Christian Ecclesia* is referred to (p. 156), yet his whole treatment of the Pastoral Epistles in that book is left out of count altogether, in spite of the fact that it disallows the whole position dogmatically propounded in the text. The explanation of Dr. Moberly's procedure is revealed in the curious summary of his argument, which forms the conclusion of chapter vi. He confesses himself to be a student in bonds, to go to his examination of the evidence with the conviction paramount in his mind that to accept any other conclusion than that already established in the traditional beliefs of the Church will involve ecclesiastical perdition. If the historic episcopate be not the

continuation of the apostolic "background," then the *vital principle of any valid ministry has been lost.*

"The question is then whether, between the close of the New Testament and the middle of the second century, there was an interval in which presbyterate had *no background at all*; and whether, by consequence, the background of episcopacy which we may certainly assume as universal and unquestioned before 150 A.D., was really, with continuous apostolic devolution of authority, invented and evolved from below. Was one background abolished? and when there was none, was another devised in its stead? Or was the later background, with whatever modifications of conditions or title, itself the direct outcome, by lineal descent, from the earlier? This question, and the answer to it, are cardinal. Upon the answer that is given it is not too much to say that absolutely, everything, in the rationale of church ministry, *deteriorates*. If episcopacy is really in its origin evolved, not transmitted, then the orders which it confers, and which depend upon it, are ultimately also not transmitted, but humanly devised. Then the entire belief of Christendom upon the essential character of Church ministry—which was true, in fact, in the New Testament, and during the lifetime of apostles—died to truth when they died, and has been a fundamental falsehood ever since. Then the saintliest bishops and priests in Christian history, whatever they might be in personal endowment, differed not one jot—if we need not quite say, in respect of ministerial character or authority, yet at least in respect of the ultimate rationale of principle which constitutes the divine foundation and security of ministry—from the good men whom the last

*new sect has chosen to appoint to be its ministers"*  
(p. 216, 217).

The contemptuous allusion in the concluding sentence is all the notice Dr. Moberly deigns to take of non-episcopal Christianity. His "Christendom" does not include the Churches of the Reformation, nor does his "Christian History" continue beyond the sixteenth century. Having triumphed by main force of religious certitude over the evidence of the earliest ages, he feels no need to face the facts of the latest.

## V.

Finally, if I am asked to point out what practical steps at this present time I would advocate, I would answer that for some while to come there will be need of a content and concentrated effort to create within the Anglican communion a public opinion favourable to the recognition of the non-episcopal churches. But I would dare to hope that in 1902, the attitude which commended itself to the strong committee of Bishops appointed at the Lambeth Conference of 1888 to consider the question of "home reunion" will seem more tolerable than it did to the Conference itself. That committee agreed upon a statement and a resolution, which do not indeed appear in the official report of the Conference, but, by a happy accident, were made public in the course of the proceedings. After laying down the "quadrilateral" basis for reunion, viz., Holy Scripture, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, the two great sacraments, and "the Historic Episcopate," the committee went on to speak of the duty

of holding brotherly conferences with the representatives of other chief Christian communions in the English-speaking races. Then followed this important statement and resolution:—

“But they [*i.e.*, the bishops of the committee] observe that while the Church in her 23rd Article lays down the necessity of the ministry as a sacred order, commissioned by those ‘who have public authority given unto them in the congregation,’ and while for herself she has defined the latter term by insisting in her own communion on Episcopal ordination, she has nowhere declared that all other constituted ministry is null and void. They also note that in the troubled period following the Reformation (up to the year 1662) ministers not episcopally ordained were in certain cases recognised as fit to hold office in the Church of England, and that some chief authorities, even in the High Church School, defended and acted upon this recognition in England, Scotland and Ireland. The question, therefore, which presents itself to them is this, whether the present circumstances of Christianity among us are such as to constitute a sufficient reason for such exceptional action now? To this question—looking to the infinite blessings which must result from any right approach towards reunion, not only in Great Britain and Ireland, but in the American and Colonial communities—looking also to the unquestioned fact that upon some concession upon this matter depends, humanly speaking, the only hope of such an approach—they cannot but conceive that our present condition, perhaps in a higher degree than at any former time, justifies an affirmative answer. They therefore humbly submit the

following resolution to the wisdom of the Conference: 'That in the opinion of this Committee, conferences such as we have recommended are likely to be fruitful under God's blessing of practical result only if undertaken with willingness on behalf of the Anglican Communion, while holding firmly the threefold order of the ministry as the normal rule of the Church to be observed in the future—to recognize, in spite of what we must conceive as irregularity, the ministerial character of those ordained in non-Episcopal Communions, through whom, as ministers, it has pleased God visibly to work for the salvation of souls, and the advancement of His kingdom; and to provide, in such way as may be agreed upon, for the acceptance of such ministers as fellow-workers with us in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.'"<sup>1</sup>

In a most interesting letter, printed as an appendix to the Bishop of Salisbury's biography of his uncle, Bishop Charles Wordsworth, Bishop Barry, who was chairman of the Lambeth Conference Committee from which the just-quoted statement and resolution proceeded, has explained the intentions of himself and his colleagues:—"It must be remembered," he says, "that they desired to see steps taken either towards corporate reunion or towards such relation as may prepare for fuller organic unity hereafter." I imagine that the latter of these alternatives was chiefly before their minds as more likely to be practicable, and that they had the idea of a kind of federation of congregations of the non-episcopal bodies—if any proposal for reunion were

<sup>1</sup> This passage is printed on p. 258 of *The Episcopate of Charles Wordsworth* by the present Bishop of Salisbury.

accepted—retaining their own present ministers under episcopal recognition, with the understanding that in the hereafter there should be episcopal ordination for their successors. Probably also some consecration to the episcopate *per saltum* was contemplated in the case of leading ministers of any of these communions.”

Is it extravagant to hope that the next Lambeth Conference will be better disposed towards such sane and charitable proposals than the Conference to which they were vainly addressed?

One very practical and useful step in the direction of unity could be taken at once. Why should not the Presbyterian clergy be requested to commend their communicant parishioners who come to sojourn or reside in England to the English clergy? and why should not the bishops, or any bishop in his own diocese, formally require that such letters of commendation be accepted as sufficient evidence of fitness to receive the Holy Communion? In this way not only would a practical hardship be removed, but a principle would be affirmed capable of wide application.

Two classes of possible readers will find in these sermons nothing to approve, nothing to consider. Those (as I trust and hope a diminishing number) who are well pleased with the present state of unrestricted denominational competition, who argue frankly and boldly from commerce to religion, and advocate free trade in both, who see nothing incongruous in religious advertisement and nothing humiliating in religious conflict, will read my words (if they condescend to read them at all) with impatience and disgust. I protest in advance that

to them I have no message. Those again (as I suppose a large, possibly the largest, section of the religious public) who do not perceive any reason why the traditional attitude of the churches should be modified, or even abandoned, in deference to the intellectual movement of the modern age, who are content to go on repeating authoritative formulæ without regard to their adequacy as expressions of actual belief, and think it sufficient to meet the "obstinate questionings" of the historian, the critic, and the man of science, with the *chose jugée* of ecclesiastical decisions, will regard my labours as worse than futile. With respect to them also I protest in advance that I have no message.

But if there be, as I believe, a large and increasing number of thoughtful men, both within and without the formal membership of the churches, who, as they look round on the fierce conflicts of Christian men, are stricken with an immense anguish; who, as they take account of the prevailing forces in society, are filled with a profound anxiety; who, as they falteringly repeat the accustomed formulæ of faith, and draw sword, reluctantly for the accredited shibboleths, are deeply and painfully conscious that they are doing violence to their own clearest perceptions of truth and right; if there be any Christians anywhere who feel as an intolerable oppression the strange and pervading contradiction between the spirit of the Gospel and that which is paramount in the churches—then I know in advance that, however grave may be the faults of my work, yet its design and motive will command acceptance. It is to such men, and to such only, that I address myself.





# GODLY UNION AND CONCORD.

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## THE UNCHANGING FAITH

*Preached in Westminster Abbey, January 6th 1901*

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JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, YEA, AND FOR EVER.—*Hebrews*. xiii. 8.

THE Festival of the Epiphany is the necessary complement of the Festival of Christmas: for the Incarnation of God, which the Church proclaims on Christmas Day, involves the principle of catholic redemption. Particularism is irrational and intolerable, as the consequence of Divine action: if in the Son of Mary the Christian world has rightly revered the Incarnate Creator, then no less a sphere than creation itself must be the scene of the salvation which He effects. Thus our minds pass in strict logical order from affirming the Incarnation on the one festival to affirming, as the true and necessary consequence of the Incarnation, a catholic Christianity on the other. Somehow all the whole universe of created being must be vitally interested in the redemptive action of its Creator: no part of that

life which draws its ultimate origin from Him can lie outside the influence of His Incarnation ; the "comfortable word" of the Evangelist enshrines the obvious conclusion of reason when it connects the mission of the Redeemer with the salvation of the entire kosmos of creation. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Obvious as the universality of the Gospel seems to us now, it did not seem obvious to those first believers, who came to discipleship by the way of the Jewish law. Bred from their infancy in the atmosphere of religious particularism, accustomed to regard themselves as the chosen monopolists of Divine favour, these first Christians found the notion of a catholic salvation unwelcome and even repulsive. S. Paul speaks in language, which it is difficult for the modern believer to appreciate of the grand secret of universalism, which had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. That was the "mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath [he said] now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit ; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel."

I think it a happy coincidence that the first Sunday of the new year, and, as we have agreed to think, of a new century, has synchronized with the festival of the Epiphany, that an occasion on which it is manifestly inevitable that we should examine the assumptions on which we are governing our lives, and scrutinise closely

the beliefs on which we build the fabric of our civilization, should be met by that frank assertion of the catholic claim of Jesus Christ which is the characteristic witness of this day. The question which rises in all thoughtful minds to-day is shortly this: Can that claim any longer justify itself to the intelligence of the civilized world? or, to phrase it in the 'vivid language' of common life, Is Christianity played out? We must admit—we who stand before our fellow-men as the accredited advocates and exponents of Christianity, who wear the livery of the Christian ministry, and whose lives are given as pledges that Christianity is the living truth of God—I say, we must admit that there is much, very much, in the existing situation to excuse, nay, to compel, the misgivings which inspire such questions. We look back on a century of change. You have heard from this pulpit within the last few days eloquent and impressive descriptions of the amazing contrasts which leap to the eyes when we compare the state of England, as we know it now, with the state of England when, amid the storm and fear of the French War, the nineteenth century began. I do not think I do those distinguished preachers any wrong—at least, I am speaking under the correction of your memories—if I say that, in the main, they left on us a sense of depression and anxiety. Their sermons were a public confession of Christian misgiving. And now, to-day, as I, in my turn, am called to handle the same inevitable theme, I find myself compelled to adopt the same modest and sorrowful tone.

We can no longer use the language of confident

optimism ; we can no more speak with the old assured conviction ; we turn away with disgust and contempt from the popular missionary maps, with their bold colourings of a world in Christian white and pagan black, and sinister-coloured heathen and other mis-believers. For we are faced by these two formidable facts. On the one hand, the moral state of Christendom is strangely, amazingly inadequate to what the Christian theory seems to require. On the other hand, the intellect of civilized mankind seems to find the established creed of Christendom less and less acceptable. In fact, it is hard to resist the impression that the Christian churches are no longer in the van of the moral and intellectual progress of the human race. There was a time, not long distant, when the staple of Christian apologetics was the moral superiority of Christian civilization. Can it be honestly denied that it is increasingly difficult to take that ground ? The lurid pictures of classical depravity, in which the colours are provided by the gibes of a Juvenal or a Martial, are felt to be no fair representations of that "hard pagan world," which, in spite of all its faults, has laid its spell on all succeeding ages. And the serene confidence which inspired the eulogies of Christian society, in which a past generation indulged, cannot survive the shocks to which the exact social statistics and the relentless publicity of our time are continually exposing it. Is there one trait of flagitious wickedness in the society, which Juvenal satirised with the robust scorn of a Hebrew prophet, which we do not well know to be present in the society of this great city ? Or the contemporary non-Christian world—is it so

conspicuously and grossly inferior to that Christendom which aspires to pillage, conquer, and—convert it? These questions, and questions like these, are openly asked by the opponents of Christianity, and we, its advocates, cannot ignore them.

When we turn from the moral to the intellectual life of our time, is it not the case that we have scarcely less cause for misgiving? It is, indeed, true that the imposing mass of Christian dogma remains the official statement of the faith of believers; nay, this last century witnessed, in the most numerous and powerful section of the Christian Church, extensive additions to its already exaggerated bulk. But is it the case now that living convictions inhabit these lengthy formulæ? Does the reason of an intelligent discipleship accept those lists of credenda? Does the conscience of the worshippers in the churches sanction the liturgies and endorse the creeds? We have but to glance at current theological literature to see that the mind and conscience of Christendom are afflicted by cruel anxieties: among the educated few a vague eclecticism, which tolerates all formulæ by an *ex animo* acceptance of none, retains the language, and forfeits the vigour, of the old orthodoxy; among the untaught and half-educated multitude a sentimental Christianity, which gives free play to the emotions and makes no appeal to the intelligence, which is too incoherent to be dogmatic, and therefore finds no difficulty in being undogmatic, which is too recent to be historic, and therefore feels no shame in being what the barbarous cant of the hour calls “undenominational.” Both the cultivated eclecticism and the popular unsectarianism of

our time reveal and express a deep repugnance to traditional Christianity.

I have frankly acknowledged—as I was honestly bound to acknowledge—the strength of the case which I have to meet when I venture to maintain the bold, the almost paradoxical, thesis that the Faith in Jesus Christ is still the one power which can regenerate men and, through the agency of regenerated men, save human society from perdition. I have adopted, as the best statement of my thesis, a striking sentence from the Epistle to the Hebrews. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever.” The circumstances, which moved the sacred writer to address this declaration to his brethren, were in some important particulars not dissimilar to those in which we now stand. The epistle was written at the commencement of the Jewish war, which ended in the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, and the final destruction of the Jewish polity. We can hardly, at this distance of time, enter into those feelings of horror, astonishment, and regret which that great catastrophe moved in the minds of all Jews. It meant much more to them than the shipwreck of their patriotic hopes; it came near to involving the bankruptcy of the national faith, for it seemed to disallow all those expectations which the religion of Israel had created and nourished; it seemed to convict the prophets of imposture, and to invalidate even the venerated scriptures.

No doubt the Christian Jews had in their belief a remedy against the desperate distress which threatened the religious conviction of their compatriots, but they

were slow to grasp the bearings of their creed. "The close connexion of the early Church with the Temple, the splendour and venerable majesty of the ritual, could not fail to make the thought of severance from Judaism most grievous to those who had hitherto been able to share in its noblest services according to the custom of their youth."<sup>1</sup>

It is only by very slow stages that men realize the consequences of their own convictions; long after we have surrendered all deliberate belief in the conventions of an ancient system, those conventions colour our thoughts and control our lives. So with these Christian Jews. They had deliberately professed themselves disciples of Christ, but they still thought as Jews, and, in large measure, lived as Jews. The destruction of the Temple would be scarcely less dismaying to them than to the rest of their countrymen. It would violently divorce their Christianity from its accustomed Jewish connections, and force it to stand independently of external support, on its own basis. I say that these believing Jews, face to face with a crisis which threatened their faith, and afflicted them with deep religious perplexity, may be said to bear a certain similarity to us, who now at the end of a century of theological revolution, confronted by a thousand circumstances of religious peril, are anxiously seeking the true bases of our faith.

The closing years of the Jewish polity were years of persecution; for, at a time when patriotic passion was at fever heat, it was but natural that the Christian Jews should become acutely unpopular. Thus these Hebrews,



to whom the epistle was addressed, had to endure the double strain of external trouble and inward perplexity. The sacred writer fixes their attention on the person of the Redeemer. Systems of theology, of worship, of discipline (he says) are provisional and therefore temporary; they are merciful adaptations to human need, but they partake of human instability. They become obsolete, grow old, and pass away; this fate is now overtaking the greatest and most venerated of all systems, that which had been their spiritual home, to which they were bound by a thousand tender and holy links. Judaism was, in its turn, destined to pass away. Was there, then, nothing which would endure? Had the soul no lasting support? Were the love, and enthusiasm, and bright hopes of discipleship doomed to share the common fate? He answers their cry of anguish by pointing them to no system, creed, church, Bible—no provisional and therefore transitory organisation for human help, but to the living person of the Redeemer. "Jesus Christ [he says] is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever." What He was in the past, when you came to Him as penitents and received from Him pardon and peace, that He is now, as you know well, when you whisper the secrets of your own soul, and that He will always be—the Source of moral strength, the Lord of Life—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

The witness of history, and the testimony of present experience, and the venture of the faith which (S. John said) "overcometh the world," these are summed up in the stately, simple creed, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever." I ask my

brethren, I ask myself, Is that creed valid still? Can we, without violence to conscience, and without loss of our own intellectual self-respect, accept that creed? Can we, standing on the threshold of a new century—a century which seems destined to be not less revolutionary than its predecessor—deliberately and with complete sincerity take on to our lips this great affirmation, and rest on it our hopes for the future? To these questions I, at least, must confess my conviction that an affirmative answer must be returned.

For, when in our turn we make appeal to history, one fact stands out “luminously clear” in the record of the Christian past. The one unchanging factor of ecclesiastical life is the personal influence of the Founder of Christianity. Those elements of original Christianity which have held their ground through all the changes and chances of nineteen centuries are directly connected with the person of Christ. “The Lord,” as from the first He has been styled by believers, in a distinctive and pre-eminent sense, “the one Lord” of S. Paul and the Nicene Creed, has imparted something of His own immortality to the institutions which He ordained. Amid the infinite and bewildering mutations of historic Christianity, these primitive elements maintain themselves and unify the various whole. The Lord’s Day, the Lord’s Supper, the Gospel of the Lord’s life, the Baptism, which the Lord commanded, with the formula which He Himself ordained, the Lord’s Prayer, earliest and noblest of all the historic liturgies—these things have lasted when the institutions of the apostles and the canons of the undivided Church have, in spite of immense

efforts to avert their fate, silently fallen into desuetude. Go deeper, and you will find that this unique persistence of the strictly original elements of Christianity is symbolical of the astonishing and unique fact that Christ's Personal Influence has always continued, and always discovered itself by the same tokens. That influence is the source of the Christian character, and the inexhaustible storehouse of recuperative power within the Church.

Consider these two facts. All men are agreed that there is such a thing as the Christian character, common to all the saints who have commanded the homage of mankind, and yet compatible with an endless variety of natural disposition, a plainly distinctive thing, not to be found outside the Christian sphere, a subtle blending of the austere and the sympathetic, the lofty and the amiable, the heroic and the tender, which in pre-Christian and non-Christian societies was unknown. This unique and gracious moral type is plainly the creation of Christ. In its perfection we find it in the sacred narratives, which record His life. It is matter of unquestionable fact that the sainthoods of history are faint copies of the supreme sainthood of Jesus. Hence the curious family likeness of the saints. They are so different, and yet they are so strangely similar. The distinguishing traits of their several age, race, temperament, degree of culture, manner of life, are not lost or even weakened in them, but they are all touched and transfigured by a common glory, all subtly and wondrously conformed to one likeness. It is the glory which glows on Calvary, and the likeness which faces us on every page of the Gospel.

## THE WITNESS OF EXPERIENCE. 11

Sainthoods of history—ah, yes, you say they are the treasures of the world's past, but they are with us no longer : through the haze of ever lengthening time they loom on our hungry eyes with a strangely winning beauty : but the great succession ended when faith died before the desecrating presence of modern doubt.

“ Ay, ages long endured His span  
Of life—'tis true received—  
That gracious Child, that thorn-crown'd Man !  
He lived while we believed.

“ While we believed, on earth He went,  
And open stood His grave.  
Men call'd from chamber, church, and tent ;  
And Christ was by to save.

“ Now He is dead ! Far hence He lies  
In the lorn Syrian town ;  
And on His grave with shining eyes  
The Syrian stars look down.”

Is that the fear that arrests you, as you listen to the accordant testimony of the centuries, and dread to build on it a present confidence ?

I turn to a nearer and more authoritative witness, and address my appeal to the actual experience of men. Is the personal influence of Jesus Christ a perished thing of the past, as that sad poet sung ? Look around you ; look within you : the answer cannot be doubtful. The personal influence of the living Master still bears upon us in this latest age, and still it shows itself by the old tokens. A divine discontent invades our souls, and, even in the midst of all the best

satisfactions which this earth can give, makes mere enjoyment base and abhorrent. Everywhere, henceforward, we must see Him—where the throng of pleasure-seekers is thickest, where the manifold music of this world is most clearly heard, where the sunlight of fortune shines most brightly. He fills our vision—stern as the Judgment Day and yet infinitely gentle; sad with the sadness of Gethsemane, and yet rejoicing with the joy unspeakable, of victorious love; solemn as Golgotha, yet transfigured by Easter glory; Victim, Master, Judge, Eternal King. No more can we enjoy wealth, and vaunt of success, and exult in the rewards of ambition—these things are smitten with an intolerable meanness, when we must always see them in His presence Who died on Calvary, and lives for ever. So He is still giving us the old signs. Still, as in those first days, men rise at His call, and leave father, mother, wife, children, possessions, to dare, and suffer, and die for Him. He remains the one magnet of magnanimous service, which does not lose its virtue with the passing of ages and the change of conditions. I speak with assurance, for behind my words are the affirmations of experience. The present delivers a witness accordant with the witness of the past. Here, in this great shrine, the imperishable glory of Christian service is attested by the memorials of many generations; here, in the audience of the blessed dead who are in His hand, beyond the frontiers of the world, we take up the oracle of the first age, and make it the Creed of our own. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever.”

And when from the present I turn to the future, I

see no reason for doubting the permanence of this unique influence. The searching criticism of the New Testament does not endanger it: for thereby the transcendent superiority of Jesus is thrown into more luminous prominence. The gulf between the Gospels and the Epistles grows daily broader; the difference is not in degree but in kind. Apostolic doctrines enjoy no immunity from the common fate of all human teaching: they fall into obsolescence, and are silently surrendered: but the teachings of the Gospel are still fresh and living. Christ's character still commands the homage of the general conscience: His example is still owned to be the only worthy exposition of human duty. "Religion," in the striking words of John Stuart Mill, "cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity: nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than so to live that Christ would approve our life."<sup>1</sup>

Harnack says the literal truth when he briefly declares that Christ Himself is Christianity. Thus the essential and abiding form of Christ's religion is not an orthodoxy but a discipleship. "The essence of the matter is a personal life which awakens life around it as the fire of one torch kindles another."<sup>2</sup> And plainly this Christianity of genuine discipleship, renewing on the earth the character and conduct of Jesus, provokes against itself neither the suspicions of

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of Dogma*, vol. i. p. 71.

the intellect, nor the resentments of the conscience. *And not less evidently is it capable of universal acceptance.* It is precisely the catholic principle within historic Christianity. Everything else — churches, creeds, theologies, disciplines, and liturgies — is limited, local, temporal, ethnical, political, anything save what is so boldly claimed and so fondly asserted — catholic. But this influence of Jesus is absolutely independent of all such limitations. It exerts its salutary empire over human nature as such. "All are one man in Christ Jesus." In spite of failures and blunders without number Christian missions have demonstrated the absolute universality of the power of Christ to arrest, possess, and govern men. Therefore, I submit that on the two-fold basis of history and experience we may build again our palace of hope, and make our venture of faith.

The twentieth century will witness many departures. Institutions which now seem to stand firmly will crumble and fall: incalculable changes will re-order society, possibly for the better. The Greek sage spoke a truth, which authenticates itself afresh to every generation, when he dwelt on the ceaseless movement and mutation of the universe — "Nothing abides: all things fleet. Life is a river into which no man can twice dip his feet." The twentieth century must witness far-reaching changes in the creeds and churches of Christendom. It would be an excessive expectation to hope that any of these will hold their own without alterations and transformations, unimaginably great. There will be one exception to this general fate. The

personal influence of Jesus Christ will continue still to *shape character and inspire sacrifice*. "*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My Word shall not pass away.*" Here is the world's hope; here is the pledge that in the future the springs of character and heroism will not fail us. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and forever."



## THE PARADOX OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Preached in Westminster Abbey, January 13th, 1901.*

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BEHOLD, MY SERVANT SHALL DEAL WISELY, HE SHALL BE EXALTED AND LIFTED UP, AND SHALL BE VERY HIGH. LIKE AS MANY WERE ASTONIED AT THEE (HIS VISAGE WAS SO MARRED MORE THAN ANY MAN, AND HIS FORM MORE THAN THE SONS OF MEN), SO SHALL HE SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS; KINGS SHALL SHUT THEIR MOUTHS AT HIM: FOR THAT WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TOLD THEM SHALL THEY SEE: AND THAT WHICH THEY HAD NOT HEARD SHALL THEY UNDERSTAND.—*Isaiah lii. 13-15.*

THE solemn prophecy of which these words form both the preface and the summary falls on our ears at this glad season of Epiphany with something of the shock of an unwelcome surprise. "It looks," said Delitzsch of this passage, "as if it had been written beneath the Cross on Golgotha." Why should it be set hard by the "courtly stable" of the new-born Saviour, where shepherds are reporting the visit of the herald angels, and the Magi are opening their treasures, and presenting gifts? Why must the shadow of Calvary fall at once on the cradle of Bethlehem? Why must the chill of the great rejection pierce that chosen sanctuary of human hope—the chamber of infancy? Here surely the abhorred enigma of ~~infancy~~

may be excluded, and we may dream dreams of joy without disturbance.

In the noblest stanzas of his sublime "Hymn on Christ's Nativity"—surely the worthiest gift of all that the sacred Muse, inspired by that great theme, has given to men—Milton brings together in eloquent combination the splendour and the pathos of that divine birth, so rich in promise and so pledged to affliction. All heaven opens on the poet's vision, and yet between the vision and its fulfilment falls the inexplicable shadow of the passion.

" Yea, Truth and Justice then  
Will down return to men,  
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,  
Mercy will sit between,  
Throned in celestial shoen,  
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering ;  
And heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

" But wisest Fate says no,  
This must not yet be so ;  
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy,  
That on the bitter cross.  
Must redeem our loss ;  
So both Himself and us to glorify ;  
Yet first, to those ychain'd in sleep,  
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the  
deep."

Yet there is a deep fitness in this collocation of Christ's Epiphany and the great prophecy of His passion, for the latter declares with solemn emphasis the mode of the former.

The Incarnation of the Divine Word was no sudden portent, breaking in, so to say, violently on the order

## 18 THE PARADOX OF CHRISTIANITY.

of human history : nor did it involve any disturbance of the normal conditions of human life. Christ was born into the claims, and hopes, and disadvantages of an historic position. He, too, as the rest of His brethren, was carried on to the stage of the world by the tide of time, and He, as they, had to fulfil His mission under the circumstances of His own age. The Incarnation happened at the precise moment in human history when the world was prepared for it. The Redeemer came of a nation and a family ; His ministry was no isolated thing, but the climax of a long-continued process : His teaching was given under forms provided for Him : He ministered His revelation in modes which were ready to His hand : His example was set forth by means of a normal human life in Palestine so many centuries ago. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The education of the world for the Incarnation is a familiar thought to the writers of the New Testament. Let me add to the words of S. Paul, which I have just quoted, the striking declaration with which the Epistle to the Hebrews begins : "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." It is not necessary to suppose that the prophets, who thus paved the way for the Incarnation, were only found within the narrow limits of one national history : the generous doctrine of the

Book of Wisdom cannot be so understood, and it may serve to show that the deepest thinkers of Israel in that age had largely shaken themselves free from the prevailing narrowness. The Divine Wisdom, we read, "from generation to generation passing into holy souls, maketh men friends of God and prophets." This wider view of the Præparatio Evangelica established itself among the Hellenizing Jews of the Dispersion, and was adopted into the Christian Church. S. Clement of Alexandria, who at the close of the second century presided over the famous catechetical school in that great centre of Greek thought, taught his pupils to regard philosophy as serving for the Greeks the same educative purpose as that which the Mosaic Law served for the Jews. "The way of truth is one," he said, "but into it as into a never-failing river flow the streams from all sides."

But, plainly, it was within the sphere of Israel's history that the process of preparation was most continuous and direct, for "of Israel is Christ as concerning the flesh, Who is over all, God blessed for ever." In that process the principal agents were the prophets, and among that "goodly fellowship" perhaps the first place is held by the forgotten seer whose work is included in the canonical book of Isaiah. That the last twenty-seven chapters of the book are not the work of Isaiah seems to be now generally agreed among critical scholars, and I shall assume it here and adopt the view, which seems to me justified by overwhelming arguments, that those chapters were written towards the close of the Babylonian exile.

Hebrew prophecy was ever the creature of its own age: it reflected and, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, interpreted actual experience. Thus the key to its interpretation is the knowledge of the contemporary history. History, in fact, is the hand-maid of exegesis: and the reason why the Minor Prophets remain so unintelligible is, in great part, our ignorance of the circumstances out of which they grew and to which they were addressed. The interpreter is not in a position to begin his work without so much knowledge: and, therefore, no work deserves better of the Church than that of critical and historical students, who are cutting the springs of error and drying up the sources of fanaticism by making possible that rational understanding of the sacred text which must be the basis of all sound teaching and serviceable exhortation. This unknown prophet of the Exile had learned in the school of trouble: his faith had been tried in the furnace of affliction: and through that schooling and testing the Holy Ghost had taught him truths which, perhaps, under happier circumstances, he could never have known. He is an intensely patriotic Jew, holding with passionate ardour that belief in the Divine election and glorious destiny of Israel which, from the dawn of its history, had stamped so distinctive a character on his nation. But his belief seemed to be contradicted by experience. The logic of facts seemed to disallow his creed. Israel, as a nation, had been blotted out: all the recognised tokens of nationality had been taken away. Monarchy, Church, fatherland—all had been lost. The relics of

the Chosen People were, and had been for more than a generation, exiles in the oppressor's land. Israel was fitly symbolized by the bleaching bones of Ezekiel's vision : "there were very many in the open valley : and, lo, they were very dry."

It was impossible for the prophet to conceive the destiny of his race quite in the same way as those older prophets, whose ministry was fulfilled in the midst of a vigorous and sometimes splendid national life. So we notice a distinct movement of thought. The messianic hope is expressed in a new way. The glorious monarch, reigning from Zion over a tributary world, who had filled the horizon of Isaiah, fades from the vision of his great successor, and is replaced by the more mysterious, pathetic, sombre figure of Jehovah's Servant. At first it is the whole nation which he so describes, as in the forty-first chapter, where he represents Jehovah as addressing Israel in terms of affectionate reassurance : "Thou Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend : thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art My servant, I have chosen thee : I have not cast thee away : fear thou not."

But soon he limits his meaning. The eloquent facts prohibit the notion that the people, as a whole, are the chosen of God. The people, for the most part, are content to be slaves, content to flourish ignobly under the rule of the alien. There are but few who will rise to meet the chance of deliverance when it comes, few who really care for the spiritual destiny of Israel. So the

prophet turns away from the apostate nation, and fastens on this loyal minority. This is the Servant of Jehovah, to whom His mission is given, who, in the sequel, may realise the national destiny in spite of the general failure. This "Israel after the Spirit," to borrow S. Paul's phrase, would inherit those promises of triumph which "Israel after the flesh" had despised. So in chapter forty-nine the Lord's Servant is spoken about in terms which assume his distinctness from Israel. "He saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles."

As the prophet pursues this great and fruitful thought, that it is only in the faithful remnant, which mourns the general sin, and holds firmly to the national hope, that the vocation of Israel shall be obeyed, he yields more and more to the personifying tendency of the Hebrew mind. He speaks of the Servant of Jehovah in language which seems to require an individual experience, and the supreme example of this personification is the great prophecy before us. The question inevitably arises whether the prophet has not here passed beyond personification into portraiture ; whether, to his illuminated mind, the knowledge has not been vouchsafed that the realization of Israel's destiny will be secured not in a minority of patriots, but in a supreme Person. Certainly the personification has become here so complete that even many of those critics who repudiate the Christian view find themselves compelled to conjecture some other person than Jesus Christ to satisfy the language. Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, Isaiah himself have all been

suggested. Matthew Arnold thought that "we have here for the original subject of this chapter a martyred servant of God, recognisable by the Jews of the Exile under the allusions here made to him, who eminently fulfilled the ideal of the servant of God, the true Israel, the mediator of the people and the light of the Gentiles, presented in this series of chapters; and whose death, crowning his life and reaching men's hearts, made an epoch of victory for this ideal."<sup>1</sup>

The question of the Ethiopian eunuch, whom the evangelist accosted on his return from Jerusalem, rises involuntarily in the student's mind, and seems to forbid the supposition that the personified remnant of Israel is the subject of the prophecy. "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other." The astonishing wealth of detail in this portrait of the suffering Servant, who through his sufferings works redemption for the people, scarcely accords with the notion that it is nothing more than a sketch of the ideal righteous man, such as that memorable description in *The Republic* of Plato, which may in some sense be considered a Greek parallel to the Jewish prophecy. The older Jewish interpreters understood the words as applicable to the Messiah, and it was manifestly their strong resentment against Christianity which induced the later rabbis to repudiate that application. Dr. Cheyne, who among our English scholars holds the principal place as an exponent of the Book of Isaiah, speaks with no excessive emphasis of the "extraordinary distinctness" with which this prophecy before us

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah*, p. 133.



"prefigures the life of Jesus Christ"; and the enormous weight attached from the earliest antiquity by Christian apologists to the argument from prophecy finds here its strongest justification.

The supremacy of the canonical Isaiah among the prophets in the regard of the Church, both ancient and modern, is based mainly on his evangelical character. S. Augustine relates that when he wrote, to S. Ambrose after his conversion, inquiring what Scriptures he ought to read in order to prepare himself for baptism, he was recommended to study the writings of Isaiah. In his famous treatise *On the City of God* he marshals the evidence of fulfilled predictions, and gives to Isaiah a principal place in his argument. Isaiah, he says, was by many called an evangelist rather than a prophet. The canonical Isaiah, whom the Christian fathers regarded with such homage, was really less the prophet of that name than his unknown successor. It has been pointed out that while the canonical Isaiah "is of all Old Testament writers the one far most quoted in the New," yet it is "in the last twenty-seven chapters that the greatest interest is reached, insomuch that out of thirty-four passages from him which Gesenius brings together as quoted in the New Testament, there are twenty-one from these last chapters against only thirteen from the rest of the book."<sup>1</sup> The general usage of Christendom, we may add, has in this respect closely followed the New Testament. It is the anonymous prophecy incorporated in the canonical book which gives to Isaiah his primacy in the regard of believers.

<sup>1</sup> M. Arnold, *Isaiah*, p. 3

I freely acknowledge that S. Augustine and his contemporaries held a view of prophecy which can no longer without much modification maintain its ground, and that many, perhaps most, of the predictions which they produced can no longer serve the purpose of Christian apology; but none the less, placing side by side the solemn and penetrating prophecy which has been read from the lectern, and the life of Jesus Christ, I cannot doubt that the Church has been right in maintaining that there is an intimate and fruitful connection between them. The appeal to prophecy cannot be regarded as obsolete, however much it may have changed its form, so long as from the pages of the prophets we can produce this vivid portrait of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"—a portrait painted on the prophetic canvas more than five centuries before the Baptist hailed the Son of Mary by that sublime and eloquent title. And that appeal unquestionably retains great authority with the mass of men. When Bishop Burnet read to the dying Earl of Rochester the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the Earl was immediately convinced of the truth, which the good prelate's arguments had not availed to commend to him. "He said to me," relates Burnet, "that as he heard it read, he felt an inward force upon him which did so enlighten his mind and convince him that he could resist it no longer. For the words had an authority which did shoot like Raies or Beams in his mind; so that he was not only convinced by the Reasonings he had about it, which satisfied his understanding, but by a power which did so effectually restrain him that he did

ever after as firmly believe in his Saviour, as if he had seen Him in the Clouds."<sup>1</sup>

I said, at the beginning of my sermon, that there is a deep fitness in the collocation of Christ's Epiphany and the great prophecy of His passion because the latter declares with solemn emphasis the mode of the former. Read, then, our text as the key to Christ's manifestation. The crowded margin of the Revised Version sufficiently indicates the obscurity of the passage, but the general sense is plain enough. The prophet begins by announcing the glorious triumph which shall in the end belong to Jehovah's servant. "Behold, My servant shall deal wisely: He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high." But this exaltation in victory will have been achieved by the most unlikely methods; it will have grown out of a career which seemed predestined to failure; it will confound and invalidate the calculations of human wisdom. By an abrupt transition the prophet leads us from the glorious spectacle of the triumphant Messiah to the strange, incongruous, darkly suggestive career of the historic Christ. "Like as many were astonished at Thee (His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men) so shall He sprinkle many nations." How deeply have the prophet's words graven themselves on the hearts of believers, who read them ever side by side with the sombre comment of Golgotha! The whole pageant of outrage, in which the Son of Man is the central figure rises on our view as we read of that "visage so marred more than

<sup>1</sup> *Some Passages of Life and Death of John, Earl of Rochester*, p. 190.

any man and that form more than the "sons of men." Yea, whether the prophet grasped his own greatness or not, we, who read his words through the crosses on Calvary cannot doubt that they are portraiture, and not personification. The amazement caused by this paradox of so complete a victory won through means of such piteous disaster is now described.

"So shall He sprinkle many nations." It seems evident that we must abandon this rendering, borrowed from the Vulgate, and richly embroidered with devout applications, and adopt the rendering of the revisers' margin. One great authority goes so far as to say that "it is simply treason against the Hebrew language to render 'sprinkle.'" Delitzsch more cautiously allows the excellent sense and many attractions of the traditional rendering, but decides, in deference to the usage of the language, to follow the majority of the commentators in adopting the alternative rendering; and with him agree our English scholars; so that we may without misgiving follow in the wake of modern scholarship by reading "startle" instead of "sprinkle." "So shall He startle many nations: kings shall shut their mouths at Him," *i.e.*, shall sink into awestruck silence in His presence, "for that which had not been told them shall they see: and that which they had not heard shall they understand."

The best commentary on the prophet's words is the challenge of the Christian apostle: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" Christianity is a history of paradox; and

## 28 THE PARADOX OF CHRISTIANITY.

when closely examined the paradox of that history is the paradox of Christ. Victory is through defeat; restoration is through humiliation; strength is through weakness; life is through death.

There is one aspect of Christian history which at once arrests the student. It is curiously normal, disappointingly commonplace. The Church is one human society among the rest, reflecting faithfully enough the too familiar features of the common fortune. It takes the colour of the civilization in which it exists: it is bent to the service of political, dynastic, even commercial interests; it is the too-patient victim of human fraud, covetousness, and ambition; it falls into effete-ness, grows obnoxious to many resentments, perishes in the storm of avenging revolutions, or stagnates in an irrecoverable decline. That is, perhaps, the aspect of ecclesiastical history which first arrests the student, and it is profoundly depressing. Woe to the student who sees no other! For a deeper insight gives a juster view; a wider knowledge enables a more equitable judgment.

There is another aspect of Christian history to be reckoned with: Christian history is the Epiphany of Christ, and that continues in the inexorable groove of paradox in which it began. External disaster is still ministerial to moral victory. The spiritual successes of the Church stand in curiously close relation to her political defeats. St. Paul's bold and ardent language is capable of a literal application to the history of Christianity. "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good." This aspect of Christian

history eludes the notice and baffles the understanding of statesmen. In their treasury of political precedents they can discover none to guide them when they find themselves confronted with Christian conviction, and under censure of the Christian conscience. Persecution fails, for "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." The subtler and more malignant policy of corruption fails; for scandals in the Church never fail to drive Christians back to their true strength, the Gospel of the life of Jesus, and from that inexhaustible storehouse of moral energy to draw the forces of spiritual recovery. Christianity is always on the verge of a final catastrophe; the prophets of the hour are constantly announcing its destruction; but Christianity lives still, and will live for ever, because, in spite of all the admixture of alien elements, in spite of scandals, old and new, corruption, laxity, effeteness, it is ordained to be the great instrument of Christ's Epiphany, the powers of the Incarnation are active in it, the purposes of eternity are finding in it their slow but certain fulfilment. The paradox which tries the believer's faith, confounds the statesman's wisdom, eludes the philosopher's thought, has its origin and interpretation in the conditions of the Divine Epiphany in Jesus Christ. It is the historic expression of the paradox which prophecy foretold and which the Gospel exhibited, the paradox of the Incarnation, the paradox of a Redeemer who wields the might of Godhead in and through a manhood which is perfected through sufferings, the paradox of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

## CHRISTIAN VERSATILITY.

*Funeral Sermon for Bishop Creighton, preached in Westminster Abbey, January 20th, 1901.*

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BRETHREN, I COUNT NOT MYSELF YET TO HAVE APPREHENDED : BUT ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND STRETCHING FORWARD TO THE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE, I PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.—*Philippians* iii. 13, 14.

THESE words confess the secret of the most fruitful Christian life that the record of history contains. They give the key of S. Paul's career ; they enable us to understand that extraordinary feature of his writings which renders them so fascinating and so difficult, the subtle, constant, and rapid progress of thought. That feature is the expression of a mind, singularly lucid, direct and versatile, wonderfully open to new impressions, eagerly hospitable to new ideas, greatly sympathetic, and keenly sensitive.

In S. Paul the qualities of head and heart curiously affect each other. The rigorous logic is always tending to yield to the ardours of a passionate conviction ; the conclusions, which have mastered the affections and become the law-givers of conduct, are constantly held back to wait the tortuous progress of an argument, required to satisfy the claims of a powerful and exacting

intellect. Progress of thought compelled revision of standpoints, and this in turn required change of opinion, until the apostle's career assumed an appearance of instability and incoherence which puzzled his admirers, exasperated his colleagues, and moved the scorn of his opponents ; but, none the less, S. Paul's life was a real unity ; the changes of opinion were determined by an unchanging principle ; there was throughout an underlying oneness of aim. His was the consistency, not of a partisan, or a fanatic, but of a disciple. His law of life was to learn, to move on from the partial and limited views of a beginner to the juster perceptions and worthier appreciations of a scholar who has mastered the elements and is entering into his Teacher's mind.

Religion was to S. Paul a true discipleship to a living Master, infinitely beyond him in wisdom, knowledge, and holiness, who yet came into closest fellowship with his daily life by virtue of the passionate love which He kindled in his heart. Day by day, as experience enlarged his mind and purged his vision, he learned to know Christ better, to grasp His teachings more firmly, to understand His thoughts, to see the bearings of His example, and thus he found himself continually growing out of mental attitudes which had once seemed inevitable, and casting aside opinions which had once seemed true, continually turning his back on the precedents and pledges of his own past, and disappointing the hopes and expectations based on his own behaviour. He was an inconsistent man, and he knew it, but he had his defence in the fact of his discipleship. He could not



help it; to be a disciple of Christ was to be always moving forward, always becoming disgusted with actual attainment and stretching out eagerly for something higher, worthier, better. So to the complaints of nervous and puzzled friends, and the denunciations of scornful and embittered foes, he returns this apology of discipleship: "He is ordained to call and I to come!" "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." He glances back over those years since that great choice was made; every one is burnt into his memory by some distinctive affliction; for one moment he sees again all that he had sacrificed on the altar of discipleship—the love of friends, the confidence of superiors, the applause of his nation, a successful career, and he faces again the old decision in the sinister light of the troubles and privations it had cost, and then he reaffirms it: "Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse that I may gain Christ." Inconsistencies, changes of opinion, re-orderings of life, disappointments of expectations—here is the explanation and excuse for them all: "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

S. Paul does not stand alone. He is but the conspicuous example of the general law of progress which governs all human advance. Advance whether in

## TIMES OF TRANSITION.

35

knowledge or in goodness involves a twofold process: on the one hand, the repudiation of the false; on the other, the acquisition of the true. We surrender the past as we assimilate the present. Stagnation means intellectual sterility: self-satisfaction means moral decline.

"No, when the fight begins within himself  
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,  
Satan looks up between his feet--both tug--  
He's left, himself, in the middle: the soul wakes  
And grows. Prolong that battle through his life!  
Never leave growing till the life to come!"

Discipleship, then, as involving intellectual and moral advance, necessitates and excuses large inconsistencies; but, in the case of the apostle, there was this further circumstance, that he was living in a time of transition. At such a time inconsistency is fostered by the perplexed and incoherent state of society. In an epoch of change loyalty to principles will involve continual departure from precedents. The broad highways of thought and action fail, and the traveller must pursue his journey across country, bearing forward, indeed, in his determined course, but compelled to make a thousand deviations by the difficulty of the ground, and the unsuspected obstacles—river, swamp, and thicket—which he encounters. Transition times, then, demand and develop versatility. No doubt great dangers attach to this necessary and gracious quality. The versatile man is tempted to be superficial, to escape from problems by his nimble intelligence, rather than face and solve them. He is readily drawn away into

the service of ambition ; for the potentialities of his own powers are revealed to him in the common procedure of life, and he discovers how short are the cuts by which superior wit can attain to success. He is tempted to pride—the pride of intellectual scorn, the pride of knowledge provoked by the ignorance, stupidity, prejudice, obstinacy, of lesser men. Superficiality, ambition, contempt—these are the familiar features of a transitional age, when the existing institutions and systems of thought have lost authority, and men have not yet found any adequate substitutes.

Versatility, if it is to escape these contaminations, must be something worthier than the quality by which clever men imagine expedients for every juncture, and find a way of escape from every difficulty. The versatility of a disciple does not express itself in opportunism. It is based on the conviction that experience is the teacher of duty, that Christ is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” under the novel conditions of the latest age as certainly as in that age which witnessed and recorded His life on earth. Christian versatility implies conviction of the plenary resources of Christianity, and involves loyalty to all the circumstances of human society. Versatility, if it is to be a practical force for good, and not merely a pleasing and kindly temperament, must be conditioned by adequate knowledge. It is the quality indicated by Christ Himself, when He compared the scribe who had been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven to a “householder which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old.” Versatility is always shadowed by

suspicion, and pursued by calumny. The fanatical, the merely stupid, the cynical, will all, from their different standpoints, misunderstand the versatile Christian. His intellectual range will offend them, and his catholic sympathy, and his indifference to convention, and his ready acceptance of change. He will be accused of frivolity, of doubtful orthodoxy, of chronic inconsistency. He will be a dangerous man, over whom oppugnant zealots will shake their heads : but he will none the less stand in the succession of the best Christians of every age ; in his time and place he will continue the work to which the subtlest Christian thinkers have, from one generation to another, given themselves. With S. Paul he will be able to say that his versatility had its roots and its limits in discipleship. "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake."

As I speak, I am conscious that your thoughts are outrunning my words. We meet to-day under the shadow of a great sorrow, in the consternation of a heavy and sudden loss. The most versatile and brilliant of English prelates has been taken away in the noon-tide of his powers, in the climax of his opportunities, at the height of his influence. The great diocese at our doors has lost from its head the one man who, by universal consent, was marked out conspicuously from his contemporaries as competent for that great position. In any case, we of this venerable church could hardly withhold from our fellow-churchmen in the neighbouring diocese of London the expression of our sympathy in so grave an affliction ;

but on this occasion I feel that I should fail in my duty if I did not utter in this pulpit the deep regret with which not merely his own diocese, but the whole Church and nation, receive the lamentable death of Bishop Creighton. You will bear with me, then, if, this afternoon I turn from the natural course of my preaching to dwell on this inevitable and unwelcome theme.

Of the individual aspect of the event I shall say little. The eloquent facts need no commentary. Death comes to men variously: in early youth, in strong manhood, in the weakness and desertion of old age; it comes under diverse circumstances of anguish, of glory, of shame. It is welcomed as a release, or resented as an outrage; but always it faces us as an enigma and a challenge. I shall not dilate on the humiliation which death brings on human pride, on the affliction it pours into human hearts, on the wreckage and confusion it causes in human society. Let it suffice to point out that death never seems a more hopeless enigma, and a more triumphant challenge, than when it breaks in violently upon a life inspired by high purpose, dedicated to large and important works, weighted by heavy responsibilities. Such a life was that which has been cut short within the last week. Everything that could make a life valuable met in Bishop Creighton. His death is as untimely and disastrous from the standpoint of the public interest as it is deeply tragic from ~~that of~~ the individual and the family. Let me dwell for a few minutes on the public loss.

It is a commonplace that the brief episcopate which has reached its end has been marked by a grave and

anxious crisis in the Church of England. The departed prelate will be remembered mainly in connexion with the episodes of that crisis. Perhaps the contending zealots who have troubled the peace of the Church have hardly realised the nature of the difficulties which their reckless ardour and intolerant bigotry forced into view. The Church of England is the guardian of interests far greater than they, absorbed in their petty partisanships, can appreciate. Behind the actual situation in which we find ourselves lies an ecclesiastical history absolutely unique: the anomalies of present experience have their roots, their excuses, their interpretation, in the past; they may have their value in the future. A crisis which brought into prominence, and endowed with a measure of authority, the most bigoted and ignorant sections of the religious public threatened the Church with a grave disaster. Moreover, we are living—it cannot be too often pressed on the minds of English churchmen—in a time of transition. Christianity, if it is to retain the allegiance of men trained in the science and philosophy of the age, must be reorganised and restated; and the essential conditions of a reorganisation and restatement which shall be honest, adequate, and lasting are patience, knowledge, and liberty. The Church of England, in spite of obvious defects and some evident abuses, provides these conditions. I see no other church of which this can be said with equal truth, for there is no other church which, without treason to its own past, without rejecting any part of its catholic heritage, faces the future with such noble traditions of service and tolerance, such varied knowledge, and such ample liberty.

In the interest, then, of Christianity, in the interest of the highest elements of the national life, in the interest of humanity itself, the Church of England must be held together, and preserved intact.

But here emerge the practical difficulties. The Church of England inherits a precarious political position and an obsolete system of law, and (we must add) internal divisions which, alas! are not obsolete. Impregnable against assaults from without, she is the most vulnerable of all churches to assaults from within. Anglicanism is at once the most fragile and the most precious of all the historic varieties of the religion of Christ. Its preservation is an arduous task; its destruction would involve an irreparable loss. I have said enough to show how difficult is the duty of those who now are charged with the government of the Church of England. We want in our bishops a large patience, a just insight, a far-seeing wisdom, an iron will. We want men who can read the signs of the times by the light of wide historical knowledge, who can maintain their ground against the sudden storms of popular passion and the delusive enthusiasms of partisans. We want men who can grasp the ultimate issues of the conflicts of the hour; who understand and believe in the possibilities of Anglicanism; who can apply to ecclesiastical affairs the blended caution and courage of the highest secular statesmanship.

I submit that Bishop Creighton, beyond any of his contemporaries, seemed to satisfy these conditions of a great bishop. He was a true Anglican, appreciating, with the justice born of an intimate knowledge of Anglican history, the conditions under which our

anomalies have grown up, and our opportunities have come to us. I may apply to him some words from his own subtle and fascinating study of Pope Pius II., to whose strangely blended character he evidently felt a strong attraction :—

“The study of history was to him the source of instruction in life, the basis for the formation of his character. He looked upon events with reference to their results in the future, and his actions were regulated by a strong sense of historical proportion. Similarly, the present was to him always the product of the past, and he shaped his motives by reference to historical antecedents. It was probably this historical point of view which made him engage in so many schemes, because he felt that, when once affairs were in movement, the skilful statesman might be able to reap some permanent advantage. He was not willing to let slip any opportunity which might afford an opening for his political dexterity. Had he been less of a student, had his mind been less fertile, he might have concentrated his energies more successfully on one supreme object.”<sup>1</sup>

In a fanatical atmosphere, Bishop Creighton remained absolutely free from any taint of fanaticism. He did not compromise his claims to the public confidence by a too ardent advocacy of any cause which could be justly described as a partisan cause; but he laboured for peace with unwearied effort. Some words of Erasmus, written in 1523, when the conflicts of the Reformation were beginning, well express his attitude :

“I cannot help hating dissension and loving peace.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Hist. of Papacy*, vol. ii., p. 489.



I see how obscure all human affairs are. I see how much easier it is to stir up confusion than to allay it. I have learned how many are the devices of Satan. I should not dare to trust my own spirit in all things, and I am far from being able to pronounce with certainty on the spirit of another. I would that all might strive together for the triumph of Christ and the peace of the Gospel, and that without violence, but in truth and reason, we might take counsel both for the dignity of the priesthood and for the liberty of the people, whom our Lord Jesus desired to be free. To those who go about to this end to the best of their ability Erasmus shall not be wanting. But if anyone desires to throw everything into confusion, he shall not have me either for a leader or a companion."<sup>1</sup>

You will pardon me for dwelling on these traits of the deceased prelate. Here at least, in this venerable church, the preacher can never be indifferent to the worth of historical studies, for here he must deliver his message amid the treasured memorials of the national past, in an atmosphere heavily charged with noble, and splendid, and pathetic associations. And surely it is in Westminster Abbey that the large-hearted tolerance which marked Bishop Creighton may best be appreciated, for large-hearted tolerance is the characteristic note of this the most famous of all English churches. If any man would understand the true greatness of Anglicanism, let him turn a deaf ear to the strivings of heated zealots, and draw aside to these sacred courts, where the National Church keeps watch and ward over the sainted and

<sup>1</sup> *Erasmus*, p. 360.

illustrious dead. The petty orthodoxies of religious parties are here unknown: the shibboleths of controversy have no meaning here. Here sleep together the Anglican, the Presbyterian, the Wesleyan, even the Agnostic. The Church of England can find in high character and unselfish service the sufficient evidences of discipleship. Her Master's test is enough for her: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Can as much be said for any other Church?

I say, then, that in dwelling on the large-minded tolerance of the late bishop I am lingering over a familiar and distinctive character of Anglicanism as we know it here. There will be much need of that character in the coming time, if the Church of England is to answer to the various and urgent demands of the national life. It cannot be in the future as in the past. A distinguished statesman justly observed a few days ago that at the Reformation "theologians of every country and of every denomination . . . agreed in nothing else, agreed in this, that there should be no such thing as an open question among Christian men." Hence that "*damnosa hereditas*", of theological definitions which hangs as a dead weight about our necks. The problem of the twentieth century is the discovery of religious union based on the tolerance of open questions among Christian men, the firm tenure of the essential elements of the historic faith, together with a large surrender of tradition and a frank adaptation of Christianity to the changed conditions of human life. It is sad to think that for the solution of that problem we must no longer look for the strong wisdom and keen insight and versatile ability of the

great prelate whom we have lost. We know that the issues of human lives are in wiser hands than ours: and we seek grace to accept without repining this strange Providence. The fruitfulness of an episcopate cannot be measured by its length, and there is another and a worthier standard of judgment for human lives than the number of years. "A righteous man, though he die before his time, shall be at rest. For honourable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years: but understanding is grey hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age." It may be that the untimely and lamented death of one who had laboured so devotedly, and with such large patience towards perversity, for the peace and order of the Church, may carry an authority which the counsels and commands of the living prelate never carried. It may be that at this time of sobering, solemnising grief the thought may come to some minds that obedience is better than sacrifice, and very much better than posthumous eulogy. It may be that remorse will succeed where duty failed.

The last days of Bishop Creighton's active life were devoted to an earnest effort to bring about a better mutual understanding between fellow-churchmen, who had ranged themselves in opposite camps to their own loss and the great misfortune of the Church. The "Round Table Conference" failed—perhaps it was bound to fail; but there are failures which are more precious than successes, and I am not sure that this was not one. In any case, the bishop bound about his departure the memory of an earnest,

affectionate venture for the sake of peace; and that memory will continue to encourage men of goodwill, and shame the sons of strife for years to come. Bishop Creighton, like Archbishop Tait, will be remembered as a peacemaker in a time of conflict: and we know Who has said, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called sons of God."

I have spoken at length on the public aspects of our great loss: but I would not have you think that I am forgetful of the sore private affliction which it involves. I pray God that in this time of bitter trial His Holy Spirit may sustain and comfort those whom His inscrutable will has shadowed with sorrow so cruel and so deep. For the rest of us, may we not miss the message of this woe! There is tragedy in the death of the strong man in his strength, cut down in the mid-course of his labours: but in that tragedy there is nothing mean or unworthy. He dies as the soldier on the stricken field, with his face to the foe in the task of his duty. There is a deeper and more sinister tragedy about the death of him who is taken away in the disgraceful lethargy of an idle life, unregardful of duty, unconsecrated to service, useless to the world. This is the bitterest ingredient in the mingled draught of human failure, that it might have been otherwise, that it was meant to be otherwise.

"I hear a voice, perchance I heard  
Long ago, but all too low,  
So that scarce a care it stirred  
If the voice were real or no:  
I heard it in my youth when first

The waters of my life outburst :  
 But, now their stream ebbs faint, I hear  
 That voice, still low, but fatal clear—  
 As if all poets, God ever meant  
 Should save the world, and therefore lent  
 Great gifts to, but who, proud, refused  
 To do His work, or lightly used  
 Those gifts, or failed through weak endeavour,  
 So, mourn cast off by him for ever—  
 As if these leaned in airy ring   "  
 To take me ; this the song they sing.  
 Lost, lost ! "

From the recent grave in the great cathedral there  
 rings forth for all who will hearken the solemn summons  
 to more earnest and arduous living. Would you purge  
 death from terror and shame? Then so live that  
 when it comes it shall find you alert and active on  
 the tasks of God. There is no other preparation for  
 death that can make us strong to meet it than this,

" Life that dare send a challenge to its end,  
 And, when it comes, say, ' Welcome, friend ! ' "

Therefore let us not miss the lesson of our loss. It  
 is the call to honest and faithful work ; it is the solemn  
 affirmation of our Master's warning, " We must work  
 the works of Him that sent me while it is day ; the  
 night cometh when no man can work."

## APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

*Preached on the 4th Sunday after Trinity, June 30th, 1901,  
in S. Margaret's, Westminster.*

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SO THEN, BRETHREN, STAND FAST, AND HOLD THE TRADITIONS WHICH YE WERE TAUGHT, WHETHER BY WORD OR BY EPISTLE OF OURS.—2 *Thess* ii. 15.

BUT ABIDE THOU IN THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST LEARNED AND HAST BEEN ASSURED OF, KNOWING OF WHOM THOU HAST LEARNED THEM.—2 *Tim*. iii. 14.

I HAVE placed in your hands the announcement of my design to claim your attention for the next five Sundays in a sustained attempt to understand the conditions, principles, and methods of apostolic Christianity. It may not, perhaps, be unprofitable—it cannot be untimely—that I should devote my labour this morning to considering the preliminary question why such a course of religious inquiry is worth our undertaking. Why should the modern churchman concern himself with such distant precedents? Is it not obviously irrational to seek in the first century the solution of the problems of the twentieth? When, setting aside pious convention, we look facts in the face, can it be denied that Christianity, as we know it, is the

product of history, that its creed, its ethics, its institutions, its worship, are the creatures of a long development?

Such questions as these are much in men's minds now; and, unquestionably, the answers they must receive are neither confident nor clear. It is notorious that in two directions contemporary Christendom is boldly casting off allegiance to the precedents of Christian history. On the one hand, the Roman Church has by its new dogma of Infallibility claimed and provided for complete liberty of innovation. There is no longer any constitutional necessity in that church for bringing into play the normal conservative agencies. The last General Council properly ends the series, for all the powers which historically attach to general councils are now vested in the pontiff. I do not discuss the fact, I merely point to it. The Church of Rome is free of the past, and can shape her own course in the future. Cardinal Manning's much-criticised dictum has always seemed to me, from the standpoint of the modern Roman Catholic, self-evident. "The appeal to history is itself a heresy." On the other hand, there is a kindred tendency within the Protestant sphere. We in England hear much of a Christianity which is described by the uncouth adjectives "undogmatic" and "undenominational." Without questioning the practical conveniences of a form of Christianity which ignores the obstinate and long-standing divergences of Christian belief, and approves all the vagaries of Christian enthusiasm, I point out that "undogmatic and undenominational Christianity" implies a repudiation of Christian precedents, and, not less than the Roman infallibility, secures

complete liberty of innovation. It is a curious and anxious speculation what transformations may come upon the Christian religion when thus frankly parted from its historic connexions; but on that fascinating but melancholy theme I must not now dwell. Rather I would ask whether this general repudiation of the Christian past does not imply a profound misconception of Christianity itself, or, to express myself more conveniently, I would inquire what is the nature of the authority which has been generally claimed for apostolic precedents, and how far that authority can be serviceable to the modern Church.

Let me begin by reminding you that—

1. The supreme assumption of Christianity in all its forms is the Divine mission of Jesus Christ. Essentially this is the doctrine of the Incarnation, for it is required in the perfect fulfilment of the Divine mission that an intelligible and adequate discovery of the Divine character and purpose should be made, and this implies far more than a communicated message. The Divine word must be interpreted and, in a sense, applied in a Divine life; and that life must be set before men in the familiar terms of human experience.

Christianity is the Gospel of Divine self-revelation: and it is expressed not in such and such precepts, but in the whole personality of Jesus Christ. That personality spoke out in the manifold witness of teaching and example. Christ was Prophet, Teacher, Master, Friend, Son, Neighbour, Citizen, Sufferer, Victim, Martyr: and in all these and a hundred other descriptions He unfolded His character, severe yet tender, chaste, loving



infinitely wise, and profoundly sympathetic, lofty, righteous, merciful—a character the influence of which upon others was the very breath of the Spirit of God, which awed and allured and purified and kindled men, claimed and received the homage of their consciences, stirred and held the affections of their hearts, moved them to obedience, and by inevitable stages to adoration. They knew it was human; they felt it was Divine. When He claimed to be, in unique and sovereign sense, Son of God, they owned and confessed the claim to be true. Remember, it is not merely S. John, but S. Matthew and S. Luke also, who register His claim. “All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.” The Divine self-revelation in Jesus Christ was made to the apostles, and, through them, to mankind. The Divine plan of bringing home that revealed truth to mankind in and through a religious society was imparted to and carried into effect by the apostles. We may marvel, we cannot help marvelling, that the Divine action should have been so indirect: and our marvel almost deepens into amazement and darkens into unbelief, when we trace the actual course of Christian history, and discover that the Divine society founded by the apostles has enjoyed, so far as we can discover, no exemption from the disintegrating and corrupting influences of time. One circumstance, however, stands between Christianity and its total perversion. The apostles left behind them the materials,

out of which, either by their own efforts or by the efforts of their immediate followers, the New Testament has been fashioned. This is the pre-eminent character of the New Testament—it is the register of the apostolic testimony. In the process of forming a canon of Christian Scriptures, “the general test which determined the place of a book in the New Testament was no doubt apostolicity.”<sup>1</sup> With a true instinct the early Church fastened on the apostles as necessarily fulfilling, not merely for their own time, but for all succeeding ages, a function of the utmost importance. They spoke to the Church always in their writings, to which within a few generations was universally ascribed the character of canonical Scripture. The Church was “apostolic,” the ministry “apostolic,” the Creed “apostolic,” the New Testament “apostolic.” I say this constant emphasis on the apostolic authority for whatsoever the Church believed and did was dictated by a true instinct; for, the more we study Christian history, the more we are confirmed in this conclusion, that the apostolic testimony enshrined in the New Testament has been the principal barrier against perversion and decay. There the gospel of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ has remained on record, always ready to be appealed to against aberrations of belief and enormities of practice, a standing menace to established abuses, a perpetual prophecy of reformation.

The New Testament is the law-book of the Christian society, and the magna charta of the Christian liberties. It provides the test of Christian truth; it enshrines the palladium of Christian morality. By its aid the Church

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Sanday : Bampton Lectures, p. 47.*

may recover hold of first principles, and discern between the wholesome development of her system and developments which are not wholesome. When we review the facts, and recall what the New Testament has been in the history of Christianity, we have no inclination to dispute the traditional belief that its authors laboured under the special protection of the Spirit of Truth. When we compare the apostolic literature with that of the immediately succeeding time, with the Christian literature of all subsequent ages, we find ourselves forced to recognize a superiority so profound as to require a separate category for its expression, and we no longer quarrel with the time-honoured declaration that the apostolic literature is in an unique sense an inspired thing, a fresh and authentic utterance of the Mind of Christ.

The exhortations of S. Paul with which I prefaced my sermon come home to us with direct and cogent force when, with the New Testament in our hands, we face the practical questions of our time, and seek to apply the unchangeable principles of Christianity to the novel circumstances of the modern world. "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours." That counsel, addressed to the immature converts of Thessalonica, is taken from one of the earliest of S. Paul's writings: it is echoed in his latest, when from his Roman prison he thus admonishes the ripest and dearest of his disciples: "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

2. If this be indeed a true application of S. Paul's words, it remains for me briefly to show what is the particular service which this habitual reference to and deference towards the New Testament is capable of rendering to the modern Church. Our position as churchmen may, perhaps, be described as one of paralysed optimism. We were never so confident of the inherent vitality of Christianity; we were never so oppressed by its traditional forms. The great wave of aggressive materialism which two generations ago seemed irresistible has apparently spent its force. On all hands men, even though opposed to the faith of Christ and intensely hostile to the ecclesiastical system, yet confess, often with astonishing frankness, the moral impotence of mere secularism. An eloquent French writer of our own time speaks with no less truth than pathos of "the lament which fills our age, the lament of the orphan, who has no more a heavenly Father to speak to him and guide him. It runs, he says, from one end of the century to the other, amid the crash of wars and revolutions, amid the triumphant cries of science, amid the sarcasms of egotism and scepticism, amid the everlasting tumult of life on its way. . . . See how the century at its close betakes itself to murmuring words of faith; goes in quest of a revelation from Ibsen to Tolstoi, from Buddha to Fiesole; hails in splendid hymns a vague Deity who pays no heed, and attempts to join hands in defence of a creed in which it has no faith."<sup>1</sup>

There is everywhere a return of popular feeling to religion, or at least to sentiments which are eminently

<sup>1</sup> Darmesteter: *Les Prophètes d'Israël*, pp. iii., iv.

favourable to religion. The strength of the religious reaction may in part be measured by the astonishing success of various theurgic movements, such as Christian Science, which (whatever else may be said of them) disclose to view a vast fund of yearning credulity in the very centres of our materialised and sceptical civilisation. In a thousand ways—according to the bent of their genius or the colour of their experience—men are striving after the truths which in Christianity are essential and characteristic. The fact is full of encouragement, and it inspires in the observant Christian boundless hopes. He feels that the ultimate gainer from all this spiritual movement must be the religion of the Incarnation. S. Augustine's famous confession seems the cry of civilised humanity, weary to death with the hollow and arrogant sophistries which too long have claimed its allegiance: *Fecisti nos ad Te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te*—"O Lord, Thou hast fashioned us for Thyself, and our heart has no rest until it rests in Thee."

• But when we attempt to make answer, as Christians, to this appeal of humanity, we seem to be paralysed by our intolerable systems. It is a startling but certain fact that the revival of the religious sentiment co-exists in the same minds with a deep and definite repugnance to organised Christianity. The general conscience turns with something like contempt from the churches. Cardinal Manning somewhere notices with alarm that at a large public meeting in America the Church was hissed, while the name of Christ was received with applause. I have myself heard a great assembly of

self-styled secularists in East London cheer our Saviour with obvious sincerity. What can it mean? Why does the general conscience distinguish so sharply between current Christianity and its Founder? What malignant force is that, which compels Christians to be for ever alienating gratuitously, wantonly, the very people they honestly desire to win to the Christian faith? Consider the repugnance with which a candid and pious intelligence discovers that Christian men really care about such trivialities as those which have been the subjects of angry controversy during the "Church Crisis." I confess I am so ashamed that I can hardly face my countrymen. And yet, though we perceive our own follies, we seem caught into a vicious circle, and we cannot escape from them. We are stricken with the timidity which is born of secret doubt, and for lack of recognised and authoritative and adequate marks by which to distinguish truth from error, and the eternal from the transitory, we are dragged helplessly in the wake of the fanaticisms we deplore and despise.

Surely the moral of our present humiliations is the necessity of a return to first principles: we must get behind the prejudices, interests, errors, associations, of history, to the Fountain-head of Christianity—we must sit at the feet of the Master, and move again in the company of the apostles. We must recover the sense of religious proportion, and see contemporary questions in their true perspective. We must become in temper and spirit, and not merely in name and claim, an Apostolic Church, and then we may invoke with confidence that Divine guidance which inspired the

apostles ; then it may be, nay, it must be, that we, too shall gain that spirit of courageous initiative, of resource, of enterprise, of originality, which marked the apostolic age ; then we in our turn shall display the tenacious loyalty to the mind of Christ which chastened and coloured the Apostolic Church. Then, and not till then, may we put our hands to the great and difficult task for which Christendom is waiting—the task of bringing the mingled mass of traditional Christianity under the searching and effective criticism of the New Testament, cutting away the ample growths of time, and the vile parasitic plants of mundane interest, and so releasing for new and greater developments that Tree of Life whose roots are watered by the river of God, and “ whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.”

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.—I.

### THE PENTECOSTAL GIFT.

*Preached on the 5th Sunday after Trinity (July 7th, 1901), in  
S. Margaret's, Westminster.*

AND WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS NOW COME, THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE. AND SUDDENLY THERE CAME FROM HEAVEN A SOUND AS OF THE RUSHING OF A MIGHTY WIND, AND IT FILLED ALL THE HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SITTING. AND THERE APPEARED UNTO THEM TONGUES PARTING ASUNDER LIKE AS OF FIRE: AND IT SAT UPON EACH OF THEM. AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES, AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE.—*Acts ii. 14.*

FEW questions have been more hotly debated, and few are of greater intrinsic difficulty, than the precise historical value of the first twelve chapters of the Acts. It is almost universally agreed that the later portion of the book, in which the missionary journeys of S. Paul are described, is of the highest quality of evidence. The author was largely an eye-witness of the events which he recorded, and as to the speeches of the apostle, if we cannot positively affirm their authenticity in view of the established literary fashion of the time, yet all must



allow that they are thoroughly Pauline in character, and that the author was well-placed for transcribing the actual words of the apostle, if he wished to do so. But the first twelve chapters admittedly stand on another footing. The author of the Acts could not have had personal knowledge of the facts, and there are hardly any means of determining with certainty the actual sources of his information. It would seem, perhaps, most probable that he included among his authorities one or more written statements. If we are right, as I have little doubt that we are, in accepting the unanimous testimony of the Church from the second century onwards as to the authorship of the book, then it is easy to perceive very satisfactory sources from which S. Luke might have gathered materials both for "the former treatise," which recorded the history of Jesus Christ, and the later work, which narrated the acts of S. Peter and S. Paul. He was the companion and intimate friend of S. Paul himself. He is known to have been acquainted with the deacon and evangelist Philip, and to have been associated with S. Mark, S. Peter's "interpreter," in the last years of S. Paul's life. He was, thus, familiar with the inner circle of the Apostolic Church, and in a position to learn all that was to be learned about the origins of Christianity. You will not expect me to discuss further the general question of the authorship of the Acts, but obviously I could not enter on my subject without some preliminary statement as to the document which I had chosen as the basis of my preaching.

The narrative of the Day of Pentecost presents a

curious literary problem. It cannot be regarded as, in the full sense, historical, for reasons which I shall state immediately, but it certainly is something more than a free creation of pious fancy, or the artificial product of ecclesiastical policy. Even those scholars who take the most unfavourable view of the narrative yet recognize the sermon of S. Peter as evidently primitive. It is no doubt the case that they are influenced in their attitude by the notion that the simple Christology of that sermon can be used as a weapon against the traditional belief of the Church; but, however that may be, their concession is notable, and goes far to discount their unfavourable verdict on the narrative as a whole. I conceive the truth to lie midway between the extreme positions. We cannot suppose that within a few weeks of the Crucifixion the disciples were openly established in Jerusalem as a numerous, increasing, and popular community, preaching with the utmost publicity and in the very Temple courts the messiahship and resurrection of One whom the united powers of Church and State had condemned, and with extremest circumstances of public ignominy executed.

I agree with Weizsäcker that such an origin of Christianity is "historically impossible." I agree with him that the first stages of Christian history in Jerusalem, as everywhere else, were passed in obscurity, that the Gospel was first whispered in the ear before it was proclaimed on the housetops, that the Church in the capital, as in the great cities of the empire, grew out of households converted one by one, and ultimately federating into an ordered society. I agree that the

whole form and spirit of the narrative compel us to regard it as a highly artificial composition, belonging, moreover to a type with which the Jews were very familiar, and which, beyond all question, the early Christians largely adopted. It is a symbolic narrative—that is, a record of fact expressed in symbols designed to bring out its deep and permanent significance. The Old Testament, which both directly and indirectly affected early Christian literature to an extent which hardly admits of exaggeration, contains many such narratives. The Christian prophet, whose account of that memorable Pentecost formed the basis of S. Luke's record, followed the most venerated precedents. The Divine epiphanies to ancient Israel had been so described. Thus Jehovah is represented as appearing to Moses in a burning bush; on Sinai He discloses His presence by eloquent tokens, smoke and fire, earthquake, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder; on Horeb, to the fugitive and disheartened Elijah, His approach is in like manner heralded by wind, earthquake and fire; to Ezekiel in exile by the River Chebar the same awful authentications are related to have accompanied the manifestation of the Divine. It is certain that this symbolic writing was a recognized and almost inevitable literary mode among the Jews. We are safe in assuming that it was the characteristic mode in which the Christian prophet expressed his revelations, and we may regard the Apocalypse as a pre-eminent but thoroughly typical example of Christian prophecy in the apostolic age.

In studying the New Testament, then, we must keep

a middle way between the opposite perils of an irrational literalism, on the one hand, and a not less irrational scepticism on the other. Symbolic imagery is not historic fact, but it is the vehicle and interpreter of historic fact. Our business as students is to disentangle the truth from literary expressions, which are now properly obsolete, and which, therefore, obscure rather than convey it. Our interest as religious men is to recognize and appropriate the disentangled truth. It is, then, in the service of religion that an honest criticism necessarily works. The recovery of truth, even though it be conditioned by the sacrifice of much tradition, which has built itself into literature and art, is ultimately ministerial to spiritual advance, and no clamour seems to me more irrational and irreligious than that which fanaticism never fails to raise against the criticism of current tradition.

I have thought it necessary to make these preliminary observations for two reasons. In the first place, it seemed to me clearly futile to invite you to consider this passage of Scripture without indicating in advance the authority which in our discussion we should attribute to it; and, in the next place, it seemed to me unworthy of the mutual confidence which, I hope I may always assume, exists between us that I should withhold the view which on this subject I have been led to adopt. We may now address ourselves to our proper task. What was the gift which the Apostolic Church received at Pentecost? What must we infer from the symbolic narrative of S. Luke to have really happened? I must begin by asking you to dismiss

from your minds the common notion that the Pentecostal gift was, in the phrase of the Prayer Book, "the gift of divers languages." No doubt the narrative as it stands declares the contrary: but then, as I have pointed out, the narrative as it stands is not historical. We are, happily, not without the means for discovering the fact which underlies the record. If you turn to the fourteenth chapter of S. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, you will find a detailed description of an extraordinary phenomenon which it is impossible not to identify with that "speaking in other tongues" which is described in the narrative before us. Let me remind you that on every sound principle of criticism the first Epistle to the Corinthians is a better authority than the second chapter of the Acts. It is earlier in point of time; its authorship is undisputed; its evidence is at first hand; it is free from any suspicion of tendency or purpose. We are bound to make it our key for the interpretation of the later document. What, then, is the testimony of S. Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians as to this mysterious spiritual gift?

Putting together the indications there provided, we learn that the charisma, or gift of "the tongue," was always unintelligible to the hearers unless they possessed the power—itsself a charisma—of interpretation; that, therefore, its value as an element in the public worship of the Church was entirely contingent on the presence of an interpreter; that, though generally useless for the purpose of general edification, it edified the speaker himself, in spite of the fact that the speaker might himself be ignorant of the meaning of the words which

rushed from his lips; that this gift, both as unintelligible and, probably, as accompanied by violent physical excitement, was not calculated to make a favourable impression on casual observers, who might easily mistake it for insanity; finally, that in spite of its mysterious and even violent character, it was not really outside the control of the individual. S. Paul, though he thus takes a very unfavourable view of the practical worth of the charisma in question, did most certainly hold it to be a genuine, and, for its own purposes, a precious, gift of the Holy Spirit. He himself was richly endowed. "I thank God," he says, "I speak with tongues more than you all." It is surely quite evident that there is no question here of a miraculous knowledge of languages. There is no reason to think that S. Paul had knowledge of any other languages than those which he had learned at home in Tarsus and in the schools of Jerusalem. Indeed, the style of the sacred writers makes it sufficiently evident that they had acquired their Greek, for they often write it inaccurately, and not rarely force into it their native Hebrew idioms.

The subsequent references to the gift of tongues in the Book of the Acts are in agreement with the Pauline epistles. It is not seriously suggested that when Cornelius and his friends received the Holy Ghost and began to speak with tongues, they were suddenly breaking out in various and hitherto unknown languages. It is particularly worthy of notice that S. Peter, in relating this occurrence to the Church in Jerusalem, expressly identified the charisma of Cornelius with that of

Pentecost. "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, even as on us at the beginning." Similarly in the case of the twelve disciples of S. John the Baptist, whom S. Paul found at Ephesus and whom he baptized. No one supposes that they spoke foreign languages when, after the laying on of the Apostle's hands, "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Moreover, when closely examined, the record of the Acts is hardly compatible with the assumption, which, perhaps, S. Luke himself makes, that the "tongues" were divers languages.

The unusual and impressive word, *αποφθέγγεσθαι* which in the mouth of a Greek of that age might almost be called technical hardly suggests the common view. The Greeks described as *αποφθέγματα* the short, pointed sayings, often profound, sometimes luminous, always characteristic, of their sages, and a younger contemporary of S. Luke, Plutarch, within a few years of the composition of the Acts, collected a great number of such dicta, and dedicated it to the Emperor Trajan. So S. Chrysostom points out that the quality of the inspired utterance is indicated in the text *αποφθέγματα γὰρ ἦν τα παρ' αὐτῶν λεγόμενα*—"For the things spoken by them were profound sayings as of philosophers." The translators of the Septuagint had used this word in a kindred and even more suggestive sense. It signified the solemn, oracular utterance of the diviner, the soothsayer, and the Temple psalmist. The use of a word thus heavily charged with special significance as well for Greek as for Greek-speaking Jew cannot, in so careful a writer as S. Luke, be accidental: it

carries on its surface the warning that we are to recognize the special character of the inspired utterance rather in its spiritual quality than in its linguistic form. It is one of several indications which, even in this narrative, warn us off from that literal understanding which seems so obvious, and yet, when examined, is found so impossible.

Thus, the observation of the scoffers, "They are filled with new wine," does not seem very relevant to a preaching of which the chief distinction was that it was expressed, contrary to their expectation, in their respective mother-tongues. S. Peter's defence is hardly what we should expect if the phenomenon which he had to justify was a supernatural knowledge of foreign languages. The prophecy of Joel, which he quotes, has no reference to anything at once so amazing and so commonplace, while it is very relevant indeed to such manifestations of the Divine influence as those which were common among the Corinthians. If a knowledge of languages was supernaturally conveyed, it must have been designed to facilitate the missionary labours of the Church, although the wide diffusion of Greek rendered such knowledge little requisite for those who, as the Apostles, preached mainly, if not solely, within the Græco-Roman sphere. It is, however, impossible to produce a single instance that any such supernatural knowledge was ever exhibited. The narrative of the apostolic preaching at Lystra clearly indicates that S. Paul and S. Barnabas were ignorant of "the speech of Lycaonia," and only learned by degrees the idolatrous intentions of the people. It was



a matter of astonishment to the chief captain<sup>1</sup> that S. Paul could speak Greek, which would hardly have been the case if the knowledge of languages had been a characteristic of the Christians.<sup>1</sup>

I have laboured this point at such length because, until it has been established, I cannot usefully proceed. The salutary influence which the New Testament ought to have on the modern Church is weakened, and in some directions destroyed, by the assumption—not, perhaps, unnatural in itself, but, none the less, most unfortunate in its effect—that the Apostolic Church, from which the New Testament proceeded, and of which the life is there reflected, had its being in an atmosphere of the miraculous, which in these prosaic days no longer exists. Only when Apostolic Christianity is recognized as normal can its precedents be accepted as guides of our action: and this must be my apology for holding you to considerations which might almost be described as technical, and which, I fear, must have been wearisome. However, by facing these now, we free ourselves from the necessity of doing so in the future.

The Pentecostal gift—I pray you to believe—was no transitory marvel, the decoration of the first age and the despair of every other, but the abiding possession of the Christian Church, in which every generation of believers has part and lot. These words remain true after the lapse of so many ages, true of every living branch of the Vine of God, true in due measure of every genuine

<sup>1</sup> N.B.—Much of this is quoted from my book, *Apostolic Christianity*, p. 215 ff.

## THE ABIDING SIGNS OF PENTECOST. 65

disciple—"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The essential purpose of the sacred history is the assertion of the fact, which lies on the surface of the apostolic epistles, that Christianity has enriched human life with moral forces previously unknown, that these forces are at the disposal of disciples, that apart from them Christianity is an empty name. A power, not of this world, came upon the disciples, transforming their characters, mastering their wills, unlocking the sealed fountains of their affections, drawing into play the latent resources of their intellects, equipping them, in fact, as all the world acknowledges, to be the evangelists of human society. That power was the very Spirit of God, brought by the grace of the Incarnation into contact—conscious, intimate, perpetual—with the surrendered spirit of man; and that power, however His advent may have been accompanied then, as often since, by transitory physical phenomena, was and is essentially moral, and operative in the moral sphere.

We must seek the tokens of Pentecost still in the "fire" of Christian zeal, and the mysterious "breath" of spiritual life, and the intelligible "utterance" of religious witness. The miracle has never failed. Silent, simple folk have, under the power of the Holy Ghost, become eloquent heralds of eternal truth. No stratum of society has been too low, no conditions of life have been too difficult, no human material has been too obdurate for this wonder to reveal itself. The power of the Gospel is confessed in the cry of the multitude, as it hears the various yet accordant testimony of the inspired disciples. "Behold,

are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? . . . we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God." The vehement emotions of the first days did not, and could not, continue. They had no intrinsic and abiding value, and even while they thrilled the Church the inspired wisdom of the apostles bade men not put their trust in them. But "the fruits of the Spirit" remain, and we may still venerate in the Christian character the direct and distinctive creation of the Holy Ghost. In such days as these, when in so many directions men are seeking for physical demonstrations of spiritual forces, it is well to remember that in that first age, when, if ever, it was permissible to expect such signs, the apostles held another language altogether, and pointed always to the moral sphere as that within which we must track the footsteps of God. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.—II.

### APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

*Preached on the 6th Sunday after Trinity, July 14th, 1901, in  
S. Margaret's, Westminster.*

BUT PETER, STANDING UP WITH THE ELEVEN, LIFTED UP HIS VOICE, AND SPAKE FORTH UNTO THEM, SAYING, YE MEN OF JUDÆA, AND ALL YE THAT DWELL AT JERUSALEM, BE THIS KNOWN UNTO YOU, AND GIVE EAR UNTO MY WORDS.—*Acts* ii. 14.

IT is allowed on all hands that the speeches attributed in the Acts to S. Peter give a faithful version of the earliest Christian preaching. It is, therefore, happily, not necessary for me to inflict upon you any argument on this point. For our present purpose it makes no difference what view we take as to the nature of those speeches. Whether we hold that they are actual reports of the Apostle's preaching, or that they were compositions of the historian following the established literary fashion of his age, our interest in them is unaffected. They remain, in either case, authentic examples of that primitive Gospel which was proclaimed by the men who had "known Christ after the flesh," and it is in that

character that they possess abiding importance. At the beginning of my sermon it may be well to ask what is the advantage to us of studying that primitive Gospel. The Christian message has developed under the influence of history. As it was brought to the audience of new races, and proclaimed under novel conditions of social and political organisation, it necessarily changed its form. The questions which agitated the Greek mind were very different from those which moved Jews, and in later times, Celts and Teutons. The gospel of the Divine revelation had to prove its character by its competence to deal with all the problems which haunt and harass human life. Thus, by an inevitable process, Christianity developed into forms which were unknown in the apostolic age; and, in point of fact, the Christian message, as it reaches us, includes elements drawn from many sources and built into it by many hands through many ages. We could not reasonably resent this, we cannot certainly go back on it; but one thing we ought most anxiously to insist upon, as the only sufficient security against the worst perversions: I mean, the preservation in their original prominence of the essential features of the primitive message. The apostolic preaching must remain the standard of Christian witness as long as the world shall last.

Now all preaching, as well that of the apostles as any other, has a form which is temporary, and a substance which, if it be true preaching, is eternal. There is, to use a familiar expression which many of you will recognize, "the kernel and the husk" in religion, and it is a matter of the utmost consequence that these should

not be confounded, that the essential worth and perpetual obligation of the kernel should not be attributed to the husk, and that, conversely, the limited and anachronistic character which, of necessity, attaches to the husk of religious teaching, should not endanger by association the paramount authority and unfailing worth of the kernel.

We are, then, obviously compelled to examine the record of apostolic preaching with this important purpose in view,—the just and accurate discrimination between its transitory and its abiding elements.

Now, the most superficial study of S. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost—and we must remember that it is in these respects thoroughly typical of all the recorded preaching of the apostle—discovers three characteristic notes, which are strictly secular and personal, and, therefore, do not, and, from the nature of the case, could not retain their force. There is, first, the appeal to experience, to knowledge of the facts about Christ. We cannot appreciate, even with the Gospels in our hands, the force of such an appeal as this:—"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know." However private and even furtive the apostolic preaching must at first have been, however few in number and humble in quality were the first hearers whom the Christian message attracted, we cannot doubt that this direct appeal to the actual facts certified by personal knowledge was a principal and effective part of the appeal. The ministry of our Lord

had been carried on mainly among the poor, and for a great part of it, He had been regarded by them with confidence, gratitude, and admiration. His lamentable end must have stricken multitudes of humble folk with shame and dismay. It is with melancholy amazement that the modern Christian marks the sudden and complete desertion of One who for three years had been the benefactor of the poor. Even at this distance of time we feel the disgrace of that unparalleled baseness. It is not unworthy of notice that when the Christians of the second and following centuries began to dwell on the evangelic history, and to re-write it in accordance with their own notions of what was fitting, they tried to mitigate the shock to our moral nature by imagining a whole series of testimonies on behalf of Christ offered to Pilate by those whom Christ had benefited. The palsied, blind, crippled, leprous are described as interrupting the legal procedure by their stories of Christ's benevolence and power.<sup>1</sup> This amiable fiction, I need not remind you, has no shadow of foundation; but it illustrates sentiments which were powerful in the age which produced the apocryphal gospels, and which cannot have been absent from that earlier age, on which lay the recent shadow of the great crime. The appeal of the apostles was equally obvious and effective. Their message could find an entrance through the gate of remorse. But this manifestly was an advantage which was limited in time, to the generation which had known Christ as a contemporary, and in place to the actual

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, "The Gospel of Nicodemus" in Cowper's *Apoc. Gospels*, p. 242.

scenes of His ministry. Plainly, then, the appeal to personal knowledge belongs to the perishable husk of the apostolic preaching.

In the next place, we notice the large quotations from the Old Testament, and the constant applications of prophecy to the facts of Christ's life; and this, also, I apprehend, belongs in part, if not altogether, to the transitory elements of apostolic preaching. We know that the apostles preached in an age marked by the most ardent messianic expectation: they shared to the full the eager hopes of their contemporaries, but with this difference, that they fastened their hopes on the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. This conviction provided them with a key to the prophecies; they read them henceforward in connection with their own experiences; they discovered in a thousand details of their Master's life fulfilments of prediction; and in their hands the argument from prophecy was elaborated and became the favourite and most effectual type of Christian apologetic. We know, further, that the apostles in all matters of education were men of their age: they shared its beliefs, they endorsed its ideals, they held its prejudices. This was the platform from which they started; and their Christian belief had to find the best expression it could within the grooves of ancestral Judaism.

Now, it is certainly the case that the doctrine as to prophecy and its applications which the apostles received from the rabbinic schools, is no longer held by thoughtful Christians, and, therefore, the arguments which they built on fulfilments of prophecy can no longer be



effectively used for the defence of the faith. We have an excellent example in S. Peter's sermon. He quotes at length from the Prophet Joel, and from the Book of Psalms. Can his use of those passages be justified to the modern Christian? And is the argument he bases on them still valid? If you turn to the Book of Joel and read the prophecy quoted by S. Peter in its true connexion, you will hardly think that the prophet could have himself imagined such a fulfilment as that affirmed by the apostle. He is concerned, after the common prophetic fashion, in pointing the moral of actual occurrences. The land is nearly ruined by a plague of locusts, and he interprets the calamity, which he describes in the language of Oriental hyperbole, as the judgment of God, only to be averted by national repentance. Then he describes the effect of such repentance. Jehovah, reconciled to His people, pours blessings upon them. Material prosperity and religious revival proceed hand in hand. This happy interval is preliminary to "the great and terrible day of the Lord," in which all the national enemies of Israel shall be finally overthrown with great slaughter. It is difficult to recognize in a prophecy, inspired by the narrowest patriotism, the prediction of that gift of the Eternal Spirit freely to all believers, which should finally invalidate and disallow the religious exclusiveness of the Jews. If we may turn aside from the natural and primary sense of the prophecy, and permit ourselves to read into it meanings nobler than the prophet knew, we can certainly perceive an interesting and suggestive connection between his vision and the facts to which S. Peter

pointed, but it is equally certain that we can build no argument on that basis.

The case is similar with the quotations from the Psalms, and the arguments based on them. S. Peter undoubtedly believed that David was the author of the Psalms : it is none the less notorious that scholars now agree that few, if any, of the Psalms can be the work of the "sweet singer of Israel."<sup>1</sup> The words of the Apostle, then, have largely lost their relevancy, since the assumptions they imply are no longer to be counted upon in modern hearers of the Christian message :—  
 "Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins He would set one upon his throne ; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." I can conceive few more effective arguments when addressed to the Jews of the first century ; I see little force in it as addressed to the English of the twentieth.

Once more, the student of S. Peter's sermons will observe their obviously Jewish colour. He speaks as a Jew to Jews, and the fact shapes his language. There is no trace of any wider conception of the Church than

<sup>1</sup> See G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 86. "While the King's fame as the father of sacred minstrelsy appears inexplicable unless he actually composed some hymns, yet recent criticism has tended to confirm the impossibility of proving any given psalm in our Psalter to have been by David."

that of a reformed and glorified nation in this Pentecostal sermon. The various foreigners, to whom the sermon is spoken, are described as "Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven," *i.e.*, plainly the Jews of the Dispersion and the circumcised proselytes who had joined the synagogues. There is no mention of Gentiles. The sermon itself is, throughout, addressed to Jews. We have, then, to make an effort to get behind this Judaic form and limited reference in order to reach the Christian truth it at once conceals and delivers.

These aspects and elements of the apostolic preaching form what I have called its perishable husk. We must distinguish and separate them in order to discover that kernel of immortal truth, which alone merits our acceptance, and which, I affirm again, it concerns us most urgently to hold fast.

Very briefly, then, for I must not, even in the interest of this great theme, violate the accustomed limits of my discourse, let us inquire what are the abiding elements of the apostolic preaching. What do the apostles set forward as the essential truths of the Christian revelation? Supposing the relative importance of Christian beliefs stood now where it stood then, what would be the aspect of Christianity? I find the answer to these questions sufficiently indicated in the concluding verses of the recorded sermon:—"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. . . , Let all the house of Israel therefore know

assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

You mark the firm and reiterated insistence on the historic facts. With solemn emphasis, as strange, when we consider it, as it is suggestive, the apostles point again and again to the crucifixion. What S. Paul afterwards said of himself holds true of the older apostles. "They determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." They saw the cross through the resurrection: and as they proclaimed the latter, they found themselves forced back on the former. It is, indeed, no mean evidence of the truth of the evangelic history that they thus exalted and pressed on their hearers a fact so unpalatable and so appalling. "Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness."

You note, again, that the resurrection of the Crucified is authenticated by a two-fold witness. "We all are witnesses," they say; but they do not stop there. They point to another testimony, which was intrinsically higher, and which admitted of tests which human evidence necessarily escapes. "He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." The manifest activity of the Holy Ghost, operative in the moral sphere, was a fact, which challenged examination, which compelled notice. S. Peter, at a later stage in his life, developed this argument from moral consequences. By it the calumniator must be silenced, and the objector answered. "Wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify

God in the day of visitation." It lay in the nature of things that the evidence of eye-witnesses to the resurrection, as to any other fact, though in special degree in the case of a fact so stupendous and extraordinary, would become less and less convincing as all means of testing and checking it passed away. Let us frankly admit it: no human testimony certified in literature from so remote a past could sustain, of itself, so vast a fabric as that of the Christian creed. It is irrational and shortsighted to even appear to hold the contrary; but then, human testimony, even at its best, is not the sole or the principal foundation of our belief. The moral evidence of the resurrection cannot be weakened by lapse of time or change of circumstances; and it is deeply suggestive that from the very beginning it was insisted upon.

Finally, you will notice that in the apostolic preaching the person and work of Christ are paramount. "It is hardly possible not to believe," observes Schmiedel, "that this Christology of the speeches of Peter must have come from a primitive source." Here, at least, then, by the confession of our opponents, we have the original doctrine about Jesus Christ, which apostles taught before the subtleties of Gnostic speculation and Platonic philosophy had coloured and expanded their simple creed. Very well then: what is the Christology of the speeches? Let me put together, without comment, the very words of the apostle. Christ, we read is "the Servant of God," whom God "has glorified," and "raised from the dead": He has "poured forth" the Holy Ghost: He is the "Lord" of the ancient prophets;

"the Holy and Righteous One," the "Prince or Author of Life," the "Christ" of God; "the prophet like unto," but greater than, Moses: God has "exalted Him with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins": He is "Lord of all," "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," to Whom "all the prophets witness." These are the expressions used in S. Peter's recorded speeches; and I ask, what is the doctrine about Christ which they imply? Remember that the apostle was not drafting a creed, but preaching a sermon. You must supply a background to the solemn phrases which he applies to the Master, with Whom he had companied during three years, and Whom he had thrice denied. Admit, if you will, that he did not realize all the logical contents of the faith he professed, that his Christology sprang from his heart and conscience rather than from his intellect, that he owned a truth which he did not fully grasp, and still you come back to this that the whole Nicene doctrine is implicit in his teaching. Believe that doctrine, or reject it, as you will, but do not deceive yourself into thinking that in essence it was an afterthought—a product of controversies in later times. Realize the fact, which lies on the surface of the apostolic literature, that the supreme position, the Divine dignity, the final moral authority attributed to Christ by the Church, are original and essential elements of Christianity, however much the language of dogmatic definition may have changed in the course of ages.

And is it not noteworthy that the apostle unites so naturally and easily in his preaching the Three Divine

Persons of the later creeds—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—realized in their several distinctive action in the work of redemption, though not yet, for many generations, included in the formal definition of Christian theology? We hear much in some quarters of a Christianity which can dispense with theology: is it not well to remember that such a Christianity was not that of the apostles? And when we have securely rooted the dogmatic principle in the apostolic age, is it not well to grasp the essential character of that primitive creed? May we once more simplify the statement of essential belief into that cardinal confession, "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified"? And, as we lift from the Church the vast accumulation of dogmatic definitions, which now overlays the primitive creed, and, with firm and reverent effort, seek to set out the ancient apostolic conviction in language, coined in the mint of contemporary thought, which shall declare intelligibly to the men of our own day the everlasting Gospel of Christ, may we not recover together with the doctrinal simplicity of the apostles, their wide charity, and agree with S. Paul in the fraternal salutation, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness"?

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.—III.

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### BAPTISM.

*Preached on the 7th Sunday after Trinity, July 21st, 1901,  
in S. Margaret's, Westminster.*

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NOW WHEN THEY HEARD THIS, THEY WERE PRICKED IN THEIR HEART, AND SAID UNTO PETER AND THE REST OF THE APOSTLES, BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO? AND PETER SAID UNTO THEM, REPENT YE, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS; AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. FOR TO YOU IS THE PROMISE, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND TO ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL UNTO HIM. AND WITH MANY OTHER WORDS HE TESTIFIED AND EXHORTED THEM, SAYING, SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THIS CROOKED GENERATION. THEY THEN THAT RECEIVED HIS WORD WERE BAPTIZED: AND THERE WERE ADDED UNTO THEM IN THAT DAY ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS.—*Acts ii. 37-41.*

AN American divine in a recently published book on "Christian Institutions" has stated both truly and impressively the unique importance of the two sacraments. "If," he says, "we could imagine that the Christian Church, in the course of distant ages, should vanish from the earth as ancient heathen religions have



done, and some inquirer should try to interpret its secret by reading its remains, it would not be its creeds or confessions, its organisation, its architecture, or its ritual that would best reveal the secret of its life, for these have varied with the moods and exigencies of the hour ; but its two sacraments, which are not dependent upon human speech for their significance, which appropriate the physical elements of external nature as the most forcible expositions of the Christian idea ; the water standing for purification, the bread and the wine for the sustenance of life ; humanity purifying itself in order to sit down at the banquet of the Eternal.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not less true that on its sacramental side Christianity enters most closely into the common religious conception of mankind. The silent eloquence of sacramental symbolism has always spoken to the devout audience of men, and all religions have a sacramental aspect. We are concerned this morning with the apostolic practice and doctrine of the sacrament of baptism. It is important to keep in mind that we are certainly dealing with an original element of Christianity. We must ascend the stream of ecclesiastical history to its source before we can reach the origin of the two sacraments. Even those relentless scholars, such as Harnack, who—in the teeth of the evidence of all the textual authorities we possess—will not allow that the famous commission at the end of S. Matthew’s Gospel is a saying of Christ, and who insist that “it is possible only with the help of tradition to trace back to Jesus a ‘sacrament of baptism,’ ” yet concede that “it is credible

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 399.

that tradition is accurate here," that "Paul knows of no other way of receiving the Gentiles into the Christian communities than by baptism," and that "it is highly probable that in the time of Paul all Jewish Christians were also baptized."<sup>1</sup>

I shall not waste your time in arguing a point, upon which only the habit and exigency of an extreme scepticism can throw the shadow of doubt, but I shall rather inquire into the nature of the Christian sacrament. Our Divine Master seems to have followed the method of using, as far as possible, the existing religious materials, which, so to speak, He found ready to His hand; and the enormous importance of an accurate and thorough knowledge of contemporary conditions, both Jewish and pagan, but especially Jewish, arises from this fact. Behind Christian doctrines, institutions, usages, lie the assumptions of previously existing systems; and until these have been justly appraised, we are not in a position to estimate the amount of new truth infused into them by Christianity. What, then, did our Saviour find ready to His Hand, which He fashioned into the Sacrament of Baptism? Two forms of baptism were then existing and familiar—the baptism of proselytes on their admission to the Jewish Communion, and the "baptism of repentance" administered by S. John the Baptist as a public symbolic declaration of moral change. The latter stands admittedly in direct historical relation with the Christian sacrament, but the former, though it had reference only to ceremonial defilement, yet had certain features which were curiously parallel to the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. i. p. 79, note.

practice, and did certainly prepare the minds of the people for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

No words of comment are needed in order to point out the Christian aspect of the following description of the Jewish baptism, which I take from Dr. Edersheim's learned and interesting note on the subject:—

“The waters of baptism were to [the proselyte] in very truth, though in a far different from the Christian sense, the ‘bath of regeneration.’ As he stepped out of these waters he was considered as ‘born anew’—in the language of the Rabbis, as if he were ‘a little child just born,’ as ‘a child of one day.’ But this new birth was not ‘a birth from above’ in the sense of moral or spiritual renovation, but only as implying a new relationship to God, to Israel, and to his own past, present, and future: It was expressly enjoined that all the difficulties of his new citizenship should first be set before him, and if, after that, he took upon himself the yoke of the law, he should be told how all those sorrows and persecutions were intended to convey a greater blessing, and all those commandments to redound to greater merit. More especially was he to regard himself as a new man in reference to his past. Country, home, habits, friends, and relations were all changed. The past, with all that belonged to it, was past, and he was a new man—the old, with its defilements, was buried in the waters of baptism.”<sup>1</sup> •

This was the baptism exacted from Gentiles in order to purge away their ceremonial uncleanness. Christ adopted it as a sacrament of moral cleansing, necessary

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii. p. 746.

in the case of all, Jews not less than Gentiles, who would enter "the kingdom of God." The startling innovation in quality and range comes into view when the apostle bids his own countrymen "repent, and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins."

The "baptism of John" in two respects was directly related to the Christian sacrament which superseded it. It also was directed to moral, not ceremonial defilement; and it also was administered to Jews. Those who received that baptism did so as penitents. "They were baptized in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." John "preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." But the remission would seem to be not a present fact, but the pledge of a future grace. The Baptist himself insisted on the provisional, preparatory, prophetic character of his baptism. "There cometh after me He that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you with water; but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." It was in view of its preparatory character that the sinless Christ could fitly submit to it. To the rest, indeed, the act of preparation implied necessarily an act of repentance, and the consecrating water was the symbol of purification; but to the Messiah, standing on the threshold of His Divine enterprise, these secondary senses had no meaning. His baptism proclaimed His mission, and confessed His purpose. It "became" Him "thus to fulfil all righteousness." It would seem that, for some while, Christ's disciples perpetuated this preparatory baptism,

just as Christ Himself began His ministry with the Baptist's summons to repentance, and announcement of the kingdom. So S. Mark affirms—"Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel."

But, as our Lord went forward in His ministry, and unfolded by gradual stages, as they were able to bear it, the whole project of Redemption, the preparatory preaching and baptism were replaced by the Gospel and the Church. Christian baptism symbolized the first and created the last. It brought into view, by the plain testimony of its outward process, that primary and essential aspect of the Gospel as a power of moral purification and renewal: and by the formula prescribed it bound these graces inseparably to the Person of Christ as the Incarnate Word, revealing God and recreating man. Thus the sacrament was a just and eloquent summary of Christianity itself: and as such it appears in the exhortations of the apostles. S. Paul, for example, constantly makes appeal to the symbolism of the sacrament, and its well-known character, when he would recall his converts from the facile errors of conduct to the divinely ordained standard of Christian living. This is his habitual protest against moral laxity—"but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." This is his characteristic plea for a firm and courageous repudiation of evil on the part of the baptized. "Know ye not that your body is

a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own: for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." This two-fold effect of baptism, the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, is plainly stated by S. Peter to the penitents of Pentecost. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The question was hotly debated in the third century, and has been revived in modern times, whether the Apostles in baptizing used the full trinitarian formula, which S. Matthew ascribes to Christ. It must be admitted that all the evidence of the New Testament points to the conclusion that they did not. S. Peter, in bidding his hearers be baptized "in the Name of Jesus Christ", seems to have illustrated, if he did not also determine, the practice of the Apostolic Church. Thus the Samaritans were "baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus." Cornelius and his household were by S. Peter "commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ;" S. Paul baptized the twelve disciples of the Baptist whom he found at Ephesus "into the Name of the Lord Jesus." It seems impossible to doubt that this was the accustomed formula in apostolic times. In the third century S. Cyprian denied the validity of Baptism thus administered, which had by that time contracted associations of heresy. He attempted, with more courage than success, to explain the language of the New Testament. He would have it that baptism into the Name of Christ was only used in the case of

Jews who already believed in the Father and had already received the ancient baptism of Moses and the law.<sup>1</sup> But this "neat ingenuity," as Archbishop Benson not inaptly styled it, breaks down before the fact that the formula is used for the baptism of the Gentile Cornelius. S. Cyprian's rigid doctrine was opposed by Pope Stephen: and to "one of the prelates in the entourage of Stephen" we probably owe a remarkable tract, *De Rebaptismate*, in which the whole subject is discussed with a justice and liberality which are hardly less unusual than admirable in that controversial age, and the validity of baptism "in the Name of Jesus" is maintained. Bingham contends that the trinitarian formula was generally insisted on from the first, but he goes far to discount his own conclusion when he admits that S. Basil had to argue against the other practice, and that S. Ambrose definitely approved it. The latter held that "Qui unum dixerit, Trinitatem signavit"—"He who has named one Person, has indicated the Trinity," and we may agree to this, in view especially of S. Paul's language about the Sacrament, and the trinitarian formula, with which the Second Epistle to the Corinthians concludes.<sup>2</sup>

In the apostolic age the insistence on precise religious formulæ which marked later ages was unknown. The Holy Spirit moved and acted within the Church with a power and freedom which disdained the strict limits which afterwards were recognized and enforced. It implies a grave anachronism to read back into the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* S. Cyprian, Ep. lxxiii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Bingham, *Antiquities*, bk. xi. c. 3, vol. iii. 426 f.

time of the apostles the rigid theories and relentless logic of subsequent times.

Baptism, I said, created the Church. It was, pre-eminently, the act by which the individual penitent was bound into the Christian society. "In one Spirit," writes S. Paul, "were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." And hence arose the parallel which the Christian writers, including the apostles, established between baptism and circumcision. Coleridge displayed less than his wonted acuteness when he swept aside as "vain" what he called "the pretended analogy of circumcision." It is true that circumcision was "the means and mark of national distinction," but it had come to be much more. In the current belief of that age, it was clothed with a truly sacramental character, and the nation into which circumcision admitted men, was essentially a church. The Apostles, apparently without effort, carried over to the Christian society the names and attributes of the sacred nation. S. Paul calls the Church "the Israel of God," and S. Peter, when at the end of his career he addressed the Gentile believers of Asia, adopted the familiar expressions of the old covenant, in order to express the graces of the new. "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."



The preaching of St. Peter finds its appropriate effect in the creation of a society. "They then that received his word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." It would be irrational to press the statement—it belongs, as I said a fortnight ago, to the category of symbolic narratives; and we need not build anything on such a detail as the precise number of converts; but the important truth leaps to the eyes. Christianity, from the first, expressed itself in a society. The Church is no after-thought, no creature of late-discovered necessity, no bastard progeny of superstition and craft, but the original design of Christ—the very work of the Apostles. Nearly thirty years ago, Dean Stanley suggested that "complete individual isolation from all ecclesiastical organisations whatever" might be "the ultimate issue to which the world is tending." Certainly the suggestion has lost none of its plausibility in the generation which has passed since it was made. He must be blind and deaf who does not see on all hands evident and sinister tokens of the dislike and disgust with which religious men regard the churches. Nevertheless, it cannot be superfluous or irrelevant to point out to all those to whom the New Testament is still venerable, and the authority of the Apostles still weighty, that Christianity can only become frankly individualist by repudiating its first founders, stultifying its original constitution, and giving the lie to its first principles. All the scandals of nineteen scandalous centuries cannot bury in oblivion the fact, or disallow the ideal of the Christian Church.

Christianity is essentially and incorrigibly social. The

## SOCIAL CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY. 89

"new birth" in baptism implies the new patriotism; *that* "Our citizenship is in heaven" is a proclamation of civic duty, as well as an assertion of spiritual franchise. Baptism creates equality because it confers a status, and *that*, the status which precludes every notion of privilege. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." Between us and those generous words of S. Paul lie the centuries of Christian history, and the words reach us to-day, as a message called over the ocean through the roar of the tempest, strangely, in unnatural tones, ominous of ruin. What are the commentaries of time on the aspirations of apostles? What are the verdicts of experience on the projects of saints? The Church is here still; and the words of S. Paul. Bitter contrast, strange contradiction! We, too, are baptized, and on us lies the burden of the great ideal. "None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." Is it not well that we should recall, with shame and penitence, but not less with purpose and faith, what Baptism declares and implies, as truly now, on the threshold of the twentieth century, as then in the heart of the first?

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.—IV.

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### THE CHURCH.

*Preached on the 8th Sunday after Trinity, July 28th, 1901,  
in S. Margaret's, Westminster.*

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AND THEY CONTINUED STEDFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES' TEACHING AND FELLOWSHIP, IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND THE PRAYERS.  
—Acts ii. 42.

IN these words are set out "the characteristic marks of the new Christian life" to which the converts of Pentecost were pledged by their Baptism. The apostles stand out as the core of the Church. About them the new disciples are gathered; from them the doctrine and discipline of the infant society proceed; they constitute a visible centre of unity. The words of S. Luke are not altogether free from ambiguity. The text itself is somewhat uncertain, and the interpretation is disputed. Probably we shall be well advised if, following the lead of Dr. Hort, we limit the reference of "the apostles" to the "teaching," and read "the fellowship" without modification. He renders the passage thus: "And they were continuing stedfastly with the teaching of the apostles

and with the communion, with the breaking of the bread and with the prayers."

We have here, then, four principal "notes" of the Christian Church, as it appeared in the beginning of its history. I shall submit that these still remain the essential characteristics of the Divine society.

1. "The teaching of the apostles" was clearly of necessity in the case of those early believers. "Their rudimentary faith needed a careful and continuous instruction, an instruction which replaced that which the Scribes were in the habit of giving, so that in the most literal sense the apostles might now be called scribes become disciples to the Kingdom, bringing out of their treasure things new and old, the new tale of the ministry and glory of Jesus, the old promises and signs by which law and prophets had pointed onward to Him and His kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

The "teaching of the apostles" had a far wider range when their disciples were not converted Jews, but converted heathen. Then they had to create a new morality, to lay firmly that foundation which the Jews had received from their long tradition of legal righteousness, to adapt the principles of Christ to the novel conditions of Gentile life. Even a superficial study of S. Paul's epistles enables us to understand the magnitude of the task which rested on the apostles as religious teachers. Take, for sufficient example, the First Epistle to the Corinthians. We find clearly indicated there a teaching extraordinary in depth, range, and variety. S. Paul brings to the Corinthians the knowledge of Christ's life

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 42.

and death, and the substance of His revelation. He interprets the Old Testament in the light of Christian belief; he develops a detailed doctrine of the person and work of our Saviour. Consider how large a background of theological knowledge, built up in the Corinthians by systematic teaching, is implied in such a verse as this: "But of Him (*i.e.*, God) are ye in Christ Jesus, Who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Is it not suggestive that we should find the great keywords of the Pauline theology in the least theological of his epistles? In this same epistle to the Corinthians we find a very definite and rich teaching about the Holy Spirit, an eschatological doctrine of great range and richness, the most careful moral teaching, and the delivery of practical rules, customs of the Christian society, which the apostle does not hesitate to impose on the Corinthians. No doubt S. Paul stood out from the apostolic company as a great constructive theologian, and we cannot suppose that the other apostles, with the exception of S. John, were able to bring to their converts so rich and varied a volume of sacred science; but, then, we must remember that S. Paul, to use his own phrase, "laboured more abundantly than they all," and that, even in the apostolic age, his epistles were widely disseminated.

Two documents have come down to our own time with the claim to embody "the teaching of the apostles," and though neither can vindicate an apostolic origin, yet both do certainly perpetuate aspects of the apostolic work as the teachers of the Christian society. The

oldest of these documents is a curious moral treatise dating probably from the first half of the second century, though it may be much older, and actually entitled *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. It illustrates the work, which, especially among the Gentile converts, fell on the apostles as creators of a Christian morality, which should replace the depraved and perverted traditions of heathen life. • The other document, later in actual composition, is not less apostolic in character. It is known throughout the world as "the Apostles' Creed," the baptismal confession of all Christian folk, in substance, if not precisely in form, from the fourth century. But we must be watchful against the anachronism which would credit the Apostles with precise dogmatic forms, such as were afterwards received in the Church on the authority of their names. By the "teaching of the apostles," in which the first Christians continued, we are not to understand a detailed moral code, or an elaborated creed, but rather a progressive instruction, which included both morals and doctrine, and addressed itself with rare versatility to the novel and ever-varying requirements of a quickly-expanding society. From the beginning, the Church has possessed and depended upon a "teaching ministry ;" and, though in later times, the reason of that dependence may seem less evident, and for obvious reasons the functions of the ministry have taken a less exalted • character, yet, when we consider that every generation comes fresh to its problems, and that the unalterable principles of the Gospel have to find application to circumstances which are always novel, we shall, I think, be little disposed to question the title which the

teaching ministry can still advance to the regard and consideration of believers. It is not picturesque but ineffectual rhetoric which leads us to adopt S. Luke's phrase as a description of present fact. It is still the case of loyal and prudent Christians that "they continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching," when they impose on themselves as a standing obligation of a well-ordered Christian life, the regular and devout attendance on the work of the Christian preacher.

2. The second characteristic mark of apostolic Christianity is "the communion" or "fellowship." Here, again, we shall accept the guidance of Dr. Hort. He understands by "the communion" "conduct expressive of and resulting from the strong sense of fellowship with the other members of the brotherhood, probably public acts by which the rich bore some of the burdens of the poor."<sup>1</sup> It would seem, therefore, that we shall best consider this subject in connection with that "Christian Communism," which is described in the last paragraph of the chapter before us, and which we are pledged to discuss next Sunday.

3. We pass on then to the "breaking of bread." There can be no question that here we have "the Holy Communion in its primitive form as an Agape or supper of communion,"<sup>2</sup> or rather as a commemoration associated with an Agape or supper of communion. For it is manifest that, in considering the language of S. Luke, we cannot separate it from that of his great master, S. Paul. We are compelled to seek in the First Epistle

<sup>1</sup> *Vide The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Hort, Judaistic Christianity*, p. 43.

to the Corinthians the meaning of this simple expression, characteristic of the Acts, "the breaking of bread." In the tenth and eleventh chapters of that epistle we find what we want. S. Paul evidently describes the Agape as preceding the Eucharist. The latter he clearly asserts to be an institution of Christ, and to bear a character of the utmost gravity. He rehearses the history of that institution, and bases on it some stern and awful censures of the profaneness which marked the Corinthian practice. The "breaking of the bread" was something more than the formal act by which a social festivity was inaugurated. It was more than an eloquent symbol—more than a solemn act of commemoration. It was the current phrase for a religious rite, to which the apostle evidently attributed the greatest importance. The very phrase had historic reference; it was an appeal to the devout recollection of Christians—it recalled and set before them the Master Himself "in the night in which He was betrayed." The bread which then He blessed and brake was identified with the bread there placed on the table of the Eucharist, and the cup was the same. So the apostle links together the profanities of the Corinthian Eucharist and that last supper in the room at Jerusalem, where Christ Himself had instituted the sacrament. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh,



eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." I disclaim this morning all intention of preaching on the Eucharist, but it is vital to my purpose that I should make perfectly clear to you that the Christian Church when it made "the breaking of bread" one of its cardinal obligations was not concerned with a harmless and even beautiful social custom merely, but with a solemn sacrament, which reached down to the depths of the religious life, and claimed the regard of Christians by the most binding and awful of all names. S. Paul's language may be, and has been, variously understood, but no understanding of it, which does not wholly explain it away, is patient of a low view of "the breaking of bread." Turn to the tenth chapter of the same epistle, and you are met by another and hardly less solemn aspect of the Eucharist. In that chapter S. Paul is warning the Corinthians against idolatry. They were disposed to minimise the significance of their presence at the idolatrous feasts, and partaking of sacrificial meats. "What difference can the idols make?" they said: "we know that idols are really mere shams. Why should we hold aloof from the society of our neighbours, because they are so stupid as to think the feasts and the meats in some sense sacred to the idols?" S. Paul's method of arguing is this. He points the Corinthians to the sacrament. What that sacrament means to you Christians, he says, that the idol-feasts mean to your neighbours, and will be understood to mean to you also. The heathen expressed their religious unity with one another, and with their gods, by those sacrificial feasts. To partake at the idol table was to publicly unite oneself to the body

of devotees, and to make oneself by solemn symbolic act partaker of the idol's life. Therefore such partaking involved nothing less than the negation of discipleship. It stultified the Christian position. "I speak as to wise men : judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of (*i.e.*, participation in) the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we who are many, are one bread, one body : for we all partake of the one bread. . . . Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils ; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." It is not uninteresting to compare with S. Paul's language the eucharistic prayer preserved in the treatise to which I have already alluded, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and gathered together became one, so let Thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom, for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."<sup>1</sup> I disclaim once more all intention of preaching on the Eucharist. My end is gained if I make you see how much lies behind that simple phrase "the breaking of bread." However close the association of the Eucharist with the Agape was in the apostolic age, it never went so far as to submerge the distinctive character of the Sacrament. S. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, not to say, also, the Gospel of S. John, which certainly reflects the eucharistic doctrine of the later apostolic age,

<sup>1</sup> I have borrowed a paragraph from my *Apostolic Christianity*, pp. 159, 160.

absolutely prohibits the popular notion that the unique and awful significance of the Holy Communion belongs to the later period of the Church.

4. Finally, there is mention made of "the prayers." These, in Dr. Hort's opinion, "are probably Christian prayers at stated hours, answering to Jewish prayers. If we knew more of the synagogue services in Palestine as they were before the fall of Jerusalem, we should perhaps find that these Christian prayers replaced synagogue prayers (which, it must be remembered, are not recognized in the law), as the apostles' teaching may be supposed to have replaced that of the scribes."<sup>1</sup> We know that the Christians in Jerusalem, so long as the temple existed, were accustomed to attend its regular services, and it may well be the case that they also developed a synagogue service of their own. S. James, who presided over that church, speaks of the Christian "synagogue." It is certain that the synagogue provided the model after which the liturgical services of the Church were originally fashioned—although from the first there were new elements, such as the reading of the apostolic epistles, the exercise of spiritual gifts, the use of the Lord's Prayer, and, possibly also, Christian hymns, which gave a distinctive aspect to the worship of the Christian synagogue. The silly prejudice against liturgical forms, which in later times, and notably in our country, has been extensively manifested, receives no countenance from the precedents of the apostolic age.

Such, then, were the conspicuous features of the earliest Church—a teaching ministry, an active fellowship, the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Judaistic Christianity*, p. 44.

sacrament of Holy Communion, and regular liturgical worship. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching, and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." I said at the beginning of my sermon that I should submit to you that this is still an accurate description of the Christian Church. Let me in my concluding words justify that contention. For justification is apparently necessary. We have travelled far from the standpoints and methods of the Apostolic Church, in respect to all the four cardinal features of its life. The function of the Christian ministry, as pre-eminently a didactic and pastoral function, has been largely obscured for centuries together, and over great part of Christendom at this moment, by another and an alien conception, partly taken over from Judaism, partly borrowed from paganism, I mean, the sacerdotal conception; and while this fact has injured the Christian ministry by diverting its efforts from the true channel, and lowering the standard of its intellectual achievement, it has directly fostered in the laity that impatience of Christian teaching, which for other reasons too easily affected them. We see the result in the present state of the Church. Of the decay of "fellowship" before the growth of an irrational and irreligious individualism I can better speak next Sunday, when we have before us the fact of apostolic altruism. The "breaking of bread" is still a prominent feature in the modern church, but hardly in the old way. Its social character which, as we have seen, was conspicuous in the apostolic age, and which formed the assumption of the Pauline argument, has almost died away in front of

conceptions, which, if true, are exaggerated, and are not always even true—conceptions metaphysical and sacrificial—of which the apostolic age had no knowledge. On this matter I must speak to you on other occasions, but I cannot pass away from it without confessing the grief and anxiety which I feel at the apparent neglect of the Holy Communion which obtains among the members of this congregation.\* I suspect that there is some deep misconception on the subject in some of your minds, and that until that is removed, you will remain aliens from the “breaking of bread.” With respect to “the prayers,” that is, the regular public service, there is no need to point a fact which “leaps to the eyes” of every observer. Church-going is waning among us; waning in extent, degenerating in motive. None the less, though for the present the stream of tendency runs strongly against the Christian tradition of apostolic practice, the ancient, standing elements of Christian duty remain guaranteed by their correspondence to deep, inveterate, perpetual human needs. Teaching, fellowship, Eucharist, common prayer—these are the pillars of the Church, because they are the sustenance of discipleship; and whosoever, claiming the Christian name, neglects or repudiates them, is not merely weakening the Christian society by defrauding it of its right, but also, and not less evidently, is impoverishing and imperilling his own religious life.

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY.—V.

### CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM.

*Preached on the 9th Sunday after Trinity, August 4th, 1901,  
in S. Margaret's, Westminster.*

AND FEAR CAME UPON EVERY SOUL: AND MANY WONDERS AND SIGNS WERE DONE BY THE APOSTLES. AND ALL THAT BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER, AND HAD ALL THINGS COMMON; AND THEY SOLD THEIR POSSESSIONS AND GOODS, AND PARTED THEM TO ALL, ACCORDING AS ANY MAN HAD NEED. AND DAY BY DAY, CONTINUING STEADFASTLY WITH ONE ACCORD IN THE TEMPLE, AND BREAKING BREAD AT HOME, THEY DID TAKE THEIR FOOD WITH GLADNESS AND SINGLENESS OF HEART, PRAISING GOD, AND HAVING FAVOUR WITH ALL THE PEOPLE. AND THE LORD ADDED TO THEM DAY BY DAY THOSE THAT WERE BEING SAVED.—*Acts* ii. 43-47.

ON the morrow of a spiritual decision rises the problem of its practical application. How may it be fitted into the order of life? Precisely in proportion to the novelty and extent of the new principles which have been accepted must be the disturbance caused by them in the sphere of customary conduct. Our Saviour had employed a striking metaphor in order to indicate both the necessity and the character of the practical revolution

which discipleship would draw in its train. "No man," He said, "putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made. Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved." The history of Christianity has been the illustration of these profound words. External conditions have had to conform themselves to the spirit of the Gospel, but this end has not been reached quickly or easily. The process of reconciliation has proceeded through the stages of friction, experiment, compromise, surrender. There have been chapters of failure and episodes of violence; but the end has never been wholly lost to view, and, by gradual approaches, some progress towards it has been made. In the apostolic age we see, as in a mirror, the problem of the centuries. The fresh forces of discipleship beat like an angry and advancing tide against the barriers of custom, and, in all directions, break them down.

With dramatic propriety and sound moral insight S. Luke places the picture of Christian Communism in immediate connection with the enthusiasm of Pentecost. Discipleship is a masterful and aggressive principle, which seizes and bends to its will the whole framework of life. There is direct and apparent relation between the theory and the practice of these first believers. This relation becomes the more evident if we adopt the difficult, but on that account probably more accurate, reading adopted by the great scholar and bishop, whose recent

loss we all deplore, in the text which is familiarly known to all students as that of "Westcott and Hort." We shall then read that "all that believed together had all things common." The common faith expresses itself in the common ownership; fraternity implies communism. This is justly called "a peculiar but pregnant description of membership." But we must inquire what exactly S. Luke's language describes, what actually was the famous communism of the Apostolic Church. We cannot forget that the apostles had behind them the recollection of the common life which for three years they had lived with their Master. They had been maintained during their ministry by the free gifts of disciples, and a common bag had held their slender but sufficient treasure. From it they had been accustomed "to give something to the poor" as well as "to buy such things as they needed." It was the most natural thing in the world that the apostles, when, after the resurrection, they assumed the government of the Christian society, should revert to this familiar and venerated precedent. They would look to the pious bounty of the wealthier disciples to supply a common fund from which they themselves might be maintained, and the needs of the poorer believers supplied. They proceeded on no principle of the invalidity of private possession, but appealed successfully to the large-hearted charity of their brethren. "There was no merging of all private possessions in a common stock, but a voluntary and variable contribution on a large scale."<sup>1</sup>

All the evidence of the New Testament confirms this

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Hort's *Christian Ecclesia*, p. 48.



view of the communism of the Apostolic Church. In the fourth chapter of the Acts, S. Luke describes more exactly what took place, and again you observe how straitly he connects the religious agreement of the disciples with their mutual help. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common. . . , For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." Then follow the contrasted histories of Barnabas and of Ananias and Sapphira. The credit ascribed to the action of the first, and the guilt attached to that of the last alike imply the fullest recognition of private ownership. S. Peter's words to Ananias explicitly affirm as much: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thy power?" The "daily ministration" in which the Hellenists were, or thought themselves to be, "neglected," is most easily regarded as a charitable provision for the poorer disciples rather than a common table for the whole society of Christians.

The appeal for relief addressed on behalf of the famine-stricken Church in Jerusalem to the more prosperous churches of the Gentiles presupposes that liberal almsgiving, rather than communism, was the recognized

Christian practice. It is certain that individual members of the Church in Jerusalem retained their property even in the fervour of those first days, and were by no means on that account the objects of apostolic disfavour. Mary, the mother of Mark, is said to have possessed a house which was the scene of Christian assemblies: and S. James, in an epistle which seems to uncover to view the inner life of the Church in Jerusalem in its season of prosperity, describes a society in which rich men play a prominent and unworthy part. It is impossible to connect a prohibition of private ownership with the Christian "synagogue," in which honour is given to the "man with a gold ring in fine clothing," while "the poor man" is thrust ignominiously aside. In the Gentile churches, whose life is pictured in such detail in the Pauline epistles, no one supposes that communism at any time existed, and this circumstance itself adds, in no slight degree, to the improbability of communism in the parent church of Jerusalem.

We may accept, then, the view that the Apostolic Church, illustrious for the ardour of self-sacrifice which freely surrendered property for the relief of common needs, never adopted any hostility to the principle of private ownership; that self-sacrifice was stimulated by the conviction that the pursuit of wealth and the enjoyment of possessions were incompatible with the expectation of Christ's speedy return as Judge, and spiritually harmful; and that the primitive enthusiasm which moved individuals to large surrenders of property soon subsided before the sobering influences of time, prudence, and prosperity. It has been said with truth that "the usages

of the primitive Church are mirrored in the Gospels." There we find, side by side with the normal ministries of almsgiving, conspicuous examples of abnegation, such as that of Zacchæus, who seems, as an act of penitence, to have surrendered all his property to the objects of restitution and charity; and we see that our Saviour distinctly authorised an habitual contempt for wealth, not merely by asserting in very solemn words its spiritual disadvantages, but also by addressing to individuals direct calls to renunciation. The effect of Christ's teaching and example is seen in the action of the apostolic society.

It has, however, been suggested that the communism of the apostolic church had another character corresponding to another origin. The source of the Christian practice has been found by some students in the practice of the most interesting of contemporary Jewish sects—that of the Essenes. We may freely admit that between the accounts which Philo and Josephus give of the Essenes, and that which the New Testament gives of the first Christians, there is a curious and impressive resemblance. "Their love of virtue," says Philo, "revealed itself in their indifference to money, worldly position and pleasure. Their love of man in their kindness, their equality, their fellowship passing all words. For no one had his private house, but shared his dwelling with all: and, living as they did in colonies, they threw open their doors to any of their sect who came their way. They had a storehouse, common expenditure, common raiments, common food eaten in Syssitia, or common meals. This was made possible

by their practice of putting whatever they each earned day by day into a common fund, out of which also the sick were supported when they could not work. The aged among them were objects of reverence and honour, and treated by the rest as parents by real children." Josephus speaks in similar terms of these ascetic Jews. "They owned no slaves," he says, "and were wholly devoted to agricultural pursuits. They despised wealth and shared their possessions, so that a rich man among them had no more enjoyment of his own property than had a member who owned nothing. For in entering their sect a man made over his property to the institution. There was no buying and selling between members; but the elected stewards administered the common fund, impartially satisfying the needs of all alike. In every city a special relieving officer was appointed to take care of the garments and supplies of the sect and entertain its travelling members." Mr. Conybeare, from whose learned and interesting account in the new *Dictionary of the Bible* I have been quoting, enumerates a great number of "striking traits" which were common to the Christians and the Essenes, but he sweeps away with decision the notion that the former can be identified with the latter. "It is a fatal objection," he says, "to any real identification, that the Essenes were ultra-Jewish in the observance of the Sabbath, and, if we may credit Hippolytus, in their insistence on the circumcision of converts. The most we can say is that the Christians copied many features of their organisation and propagandist activity from the Essenes." But even this seems to be an excessive

inference from the facts. In no matter must the student be more suspicious than in suggestions of common origin for similar phenomena. The similarity is often superficial, the difference of principle and spirit absolute. So in this plausible and attractive instance. The more carefully we consider the parallels the less do they justify any theory of mutual dependence. The Essenes were mostly celibates; in all cases they were rigorous ascetics, the most punctilious of ceremonialists in certain directions. They constituted rather a monastic order than a church, and the rigour of their discipline rendered expansion impossible. It is in this point that Weizsäcker finds the sharpest contrast with the Christians.

The motive which prompted almsgiving so liberal as to create a practical communism was fraternity, "love of the brethren": the ascetic motive of renunciation may have entered, and in some cases been paramount; but the generally operative cause was not ascetic. Christ's example and "new commandment" held the Church to self-sacrificing charity. But with the Essenes the prevailing motive was that ascetic principle, which induced them, or the most part of them, to repudiate marriage. "Indeed," says Bishop Lightfoot, "the communism of the Christians was from the first wholly unlike the communism of the Essenes. The surrender of property with the Christians was not a necessary condition of entrance into an order; it was a purely voluntary act, which might be withheld without foregoing the privileges of the brotherhood. And the common life too was obviously different in kind, at once more free and more

sociable, unfettered by rigid ordinances, respecting individual liberty, and altogether unlike a monastic rule.”<sup>1</sup> In the “Teaching of the Apostles” we may, perhaps, recognize the tradition of that apostolic “communism” which illustrated the first beginnings of the Church. The appeal is still to an unlimited charity, not to any principle of socialism. “Thou shalt not turn away him that needeth, but shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say that they are thine own: for, if you are fellow-sharers in that which is imperishable, how much more in perishable things.”<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps I have laboured at undue length a matter which might be thought sufficiently obvious; and yet I cannot think so, when I recall the inferences which have been drawn from the traditional, but, as we have seen, unhistoric “community of goods” in Jerusalem. The monastic societies perpetuated, but transformed, the original fraternity. In their hands it took a distinctly ascetic character and approximated to the model of the Essenes. Christian history has witnessed the whole cycle of monastic development, and delivers no doubtful verdict on that mode of realising the purpose of Christ. It moves on a false principle through stages of advancing degeneration to a barren and inglorious conclusion. Monasticism is a great digression in the continuous record of Christianity, and in order to return to the main stream we must leave it on one side. We have to grasp the universal obligation of Christian fraternity,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Essenism and Christianity in Colossians*, p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Didache*, c. iv. 3, Schaff's ed., p. 175.

and to vindicate a satisfaction of it within our own personal lives.

No doubt it was comparatively an easy thing to perceive and even to respect the lines of social duty within a society which was small in numbers, clearly marked in character, and held together by the relentless and continuing pressure of persecution. It is not so easy now. The Church, in the course of many ages, has silently grown into the texture of civilised society, and Christians hardly distinguish between the claims which arise from religion and those which, whatever their origin, reach them as part of the tradition of social life.

It is well to remember that discipleship does imply a doctrine and treatment of our property which, judged by accepted mundane standards, are almost revolutionary. We are not free to exempt ourselves from that fundamental law of self-sacrifice which was proclaimed and exemplified on Calvary. I should be untrue to myself, and false to my duty, if I did not confess to you that the prevailing fashion of life among us seems to me, from the Christian standpoint, pitifully, painfully unworthy. The use to which we put our possessions is, perhaps, as good a test of our religion as any we can find, at least for application, not to others whose motives and circumstances we cannot know, but to ourselves. It is surely apparent to every one who, with honest mind and unbiassed judgment, considers the Christian society of this country, that the expenditure of income is in the case of most of us hardly related at all, in any responsible and continuous way, to our

## DUTY OF THE CHURCH.

IN

religious duty. The waxing display and extravagance of English society, which arrests the notice of every observer, and wakes the alarm of every patriot, cannot be reconciled with discipleship to Jesus Christ. The mischief goes deeper than we know. A false and self-indulgent habit of living, illustrated in high places and commended by great examples, spreads rapidly through the whole nation. Discontent in the masses of the unprivileged reflects and rebukes pride and luxury in the ranks of the privileged. The Christian Church is plainly false to its mission if it does not conspicuously and continuously resist the drift towards materialism which inevitably accompanies expansion of empire and increase of national wealth. But the Church is only the sum of the disciples, and its action is the sum of theirs. We must begin, where alone our responsibility is obvious and plenary, and our liberty of action complete, with ourselves. Let us also, as those first believers, continue in "the communion," that is, in the habitual recognition of the fellowship of Christians, a recognition which finds its natural, normal expression in serviceable acts. Let us, in the administration of our incomes, large or small (their amount cannot affect the principle which governs expenditure), keep before ourselves the apostolic ideal interpreted by the apostolic practice: "Not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." We shall regard our property without arrogance and employ it without selfishness. Our Master's word, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," will be less and less a paradox as we put it into practice, and seek our



happiness in works of mercy. His strange oracle shall fulfil itself in us, as, treading in His footsteps, we make an active benevolence the law of our lives :—"Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

## CHURCH CONGRESS SERMON.

*Preached in All Saints Church, Hove, on September 29th, 1901, in connection with the Brighton Church Congress.*

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HE ENDURED, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.—*Hebrews* xi. 27.

ON this Festival we are led to think of those unseen powers, beneficent and hostile, which are interested in our spiritual conflict, and which we cannot wisely or piously leave out of reckoning. Our Saviour has taught us very little about the "angels" and "demons" whose existence and activity He unquestionably affirmed. The imposing mass of traditional angelology has slight claim on our acceptance, being, so far as we can discover, a heterogeneous creation of presumptuous logic, and still more presumptuous fancy, working upon the inexhaustible material of human fear and credulity. Christ lifted the veil which shrouds the unseen world from mortal ken. He established its reality. He made us see its direct and intimate influence on the temporal life. He showed us that the mysterious conflict which we know within ourselves stands in relation to another warfare, in which He Himself is the protagonist on the one side, and Satan, the "prince of this world," the

“murderer from the beginning,” the “father of lies,” is the protagonist on the other. He did not by so much as one word encourage our curiosity. He limited His revelation to those broad outlines of truth which were sufficient to give us the just sense of proportion in the judgment of life, which could sober and chasten us, and induce that disposition of dependence which is the proper attitude of a religious mind; and there His teaching stopped. We were left with the knowledge of the unseen world, and its potencies of good and evil, and the assurance that Christ was supreme there, the King of angels and the Conqueror of Satan. The reticence of the Master was followed by His apostles. The epistles do not advance one step beyond the gospels. The facts of the existence and conflict of angels and demons is everywhere assumed, and made the basis of solemn moral warnings; but it is the figure of Christ Himself which fills the whole horizon of Christian faith, and provides the whole security of Christian hope. “Worshipping of the angels” is a Gnostic folly against which S. Paul warns the Colossians. He dwells on the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places only that he may the more effectually urge the Ephesians to “take up the whole armour of God.” In like manner the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews exalts Christ as by virtue of His Divine Sonship inherently superior to the angels, whom he describes as His agents—“ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation.” He describes Christ’s victory over Satan in the power of His incarnation. “Since, then, the children are sharers in flesh and blood,

He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

I trust you will pardon me if I content myself on this occasion with this brief reference to the festival, and turn to considerations which are not, indeed, alien to its witness, but which are directly related to the Church Congress, now about to assemble in this neighbourhood. On such an occasion it cannot be untimely, I hope it will not be found unprofitable, to speak of the duties, dangers, and hopes of the Church of England. For my text I have chosen a sentence from that famous record of the heroes of faith which the sacred writer rehearses in order to stir up his brethren to more earnest service and more watchful behaviour in a time of trouble and perplexity. The words occur in the description of Moses. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible."

This faculty of faith, which is the power of endurance under circumstances of alarm and peril, might be analysed into the two qualities of insight and foresight. By it the patriot Moses was enabled to divine the actual relative importance of the facts of experience, and to look beyond the present, and see the ultimate destiny of things. Pharaoh's wrath was no doubt at the moment very formidable, but to one who had realized that Pharaoh was opposing himself to the Divine purpose, and who could therefore see the king's final overthrow

as an assured event, his wrath, however fierce, was stripped of terror. The wretched bondsmen of Israel were to all outward appearance a forlorn and undone people, with whom it would be perilous to be associated, but to one who could see through that miserable aspect to the intrinsic and undying superiority which Israel possessed in the covenant relationship with the God of Abraham, all this external weakness counted for nothing. What S. John says of the Christian faith might be said of all faith in some sense and measure. It is "the victory which overcometh the world."

"He endured as seeing Him Who is invisible." This faith—insight and foresight—seems to be the special grace for which, at this time, we who are members of the Church of England should make our prayer to God. For the circumstances under which we must now work are extremely difficult and dangerous. Besides the perplexities which arise from the transitional character of the time, and are therefore common to all Christian churches, there are other and formidable problems which belong exclusively to our own church. It is not excessive to say that the value, if not the existence, of the Church of England depends, so far as human judgment can determine, on her power to answer certain questions proposed to her by the actual conditions of her life. I will ask you to consider only three of these questions :—

1. There is, in the first place, the question which immediately suggests itself to every thoughtful student of the national life, how Christianity is to recover possession of the multitudes now, for many cogent

reasons, lying outside the faith and profession of Christ. It is much in fashion, I know, especially at general assemblies of church folk, to indulge in much self-congratulatory optimism on this subject. I must honestly say that I do not see any good ground for such optimism. We are, as I see the facts, steadily losing our hold on the popular mind, and the actual position which we possess at this moment is, when justly considered, wonderfully inadequate to the traditions and professions of a National Church. This is an age of careful statistics, and we are, so to say, compelled to face facts which at other times and with less relentless accuracy might have been slurred over, or altogether ignored. We know now that in a population of 32,000,000 people less than 2,000,000 are communicants; that out of an electorate of five and a quarter millions (I speak, of course, only of England and Wales) there are certainly less than 400,000 communicants—about one in thirteen. I am not one who would willingly underrate or belittle the religious work of the Nonconformists: but, when the most liberal estimate is made of it, I do not think any competent judge would allow it to exceed the work of the National Church. Assume, for our present purpose, that the Church and the Nonconformists equally divide the religious allegiance of the English people, and even so is it not a melancholy and suggestive fact that a majority of the nation which cannot be less than three-fifths, and may be as much as four-fifths, lies outside the regular profession of Christianity? It will, no doubt, be said that the influence of Christianity extends far beyond the

limits of its regular profession, and that is true.\* The Church of Christ is "the salt" and "light of the world," as well as the family of God. But this also must be remembered: that a Christianity which is divorced from regular profession—that is, destitute of sacramental graces, of spiritual teaching, of the salutary and manifold disciplines of ecclesiastical life—is in an abnormal state, which cannot be maintained, which must either mature into conscious and avowed discipleship, or wither away into utter irreligion. And here it seems impossible to dispute the anti-religious bias of modern life. We have lost the primary schools over most part of the country, including the towns, where the population tends to aggregate; he would be a courageous prophet who would assure us that we shall retain such schools as we still possess. A great and increasing proportion of English folk is growing up in ignorance of the elementary Christian truths, which are at once the principles of Christian morality and the assumptions of the Christian religion. They are better informed on a hundred matters; their wits have been sharpened, their ambitions kindled, their standard of contentment indefinitely raised, but morally they are untaught; in character they are undeveloped. On the deeper side of their being they must be described in S. Paul's sad and searching phrase as "having no hope, and without God in the world." The problem before the National Church is hardly misdescribed as that of the re-conversion of the English people. In the twentieth century, among a civilized community, and without the sympathy, still less the assistance, of the State, the Church has to attempt again

the task which in some measure she achieved in the sixth and seventh centuries among our rude and ignorant ancestors.

2. In the next place there emerges the question, which on many sides is being eagerly and anxiously asked, why, in face of a task so gigantic, the forces of Christianity cannot be unified and united. Of all Churches, perhaps the Church of England has suffered most from religious division, and, at this moment, all the world knows that we are deeply divided. The mischiefs which have come upon religion from this source are incalculable. Let me give but one example. If we lose altogether from our national education what we have already lost in great measure—the regular teaching of the Christian faith as the basis of morality—it will not be because the English people hate or distrust the religion of which they have largely abandoned the formal profession, but because the Nonconformists suspect the Church so much that they would rather see the schools secularist than Anglican. I am not allotting blame, but stating facts. Responsibility for every disaster which follows on the conflicts of religious men rarely belongs to one side only. I am sure it does not in this case; let the discredit attach to us both, but let us face the fact. Why cannot the forces of Christianity be unified and united? We accept one another as spiritual teachers while we repudiate one another's fellowship in worship and work. We read with delight and accept with reverence the teachings of those whom we shut out from our pulpits and banish from our altars. We exalt one another's piety, admire one another's labours, take



advantage of one another's learning, and then, when we come out from our studies and conferences in order to enter the arena of practical work, we draw aside into our several camps, and speak again the old unmeaning shibboleths of party, and range ourselves once more in battle array for the old futile causes. "Let love be without hypocrisy," said S. Paul. Is there not a great element of gratuitous hypocrisy in our religious life? You must forgive me for pressing this matter on you. It is, I suppose, not the least valuable service which a Church Congress can render, that church people should be moved to think anxiously and honestly about wider issues than those which commonly arrest their notice. The tragedy of our unhappy divisions lies in the fact that at bottom we are not divided. It is but a few weeks since we all watched with reverence the departure of a fellow-Christian, set on a pinnacle of greatness, and struck down by cruel and wanton crime. We did not deign to notice the pitiful and irrelevant matter that the President was in ecclesiastical description a Methodist. We knew that he was a Christian, and that sufficed. Yet in the common intercourse of life we invert the order: it is the Christianity we forget, the Methodism that we remember. Again, I say, "Let love be without hypocrisy."

Remember, it has not always been so in the Church of England. There was a time when to advocate the frank recognition of fellow-Protestants as, in the full sense of the term, fellow-Christians was not thought incompatible with loyalty to catholic truth. In the

seventeenth century Bishop Andrewes, not the least illustrious of Anglicans, made no scruple about administering the holy communion to the dying Huguenot scholar, Isaac Casaubon. Amid the wild confusions of the period of the Commonwealth, Jeremy Taylor, the greatest Anglican of his age, could advance the generous proposal that "all of us be united in that common term, which as it does constitute the Church in its being such, so it is the medium of the communion of saints, and that is, the creed of the apostles; and in all other things an honest endeavour to find out what truths we can, and a charitable and mutual permission to others that disagree from us and our opinions."<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Wake, the hero of an unsuccessful effort to secure friendly relations with the Gallican Church, rejoiced in the fact that Lutherans communicated without hindrance at English altars.<sup>2</sup> Every student of those times could multiply examples of such Christian liberality of mind. Is it not full of melancholy suggestion that the Church of England, at the beginning of the twentieth century, is less tolerant and more exclusive than in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? It is, I know, our modern fashion to be very lavish in complimentary speech; it was not the fashion then. Men said what they thought with brutal frankness; but they did sustain their words by corresponding action. On the whole, I think their way was better than ours, and had more potentiality of good

<sup>1</sup> Pref. to *Liberty of Prophesying*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Letter to Mr. Beauvoir, Feb. 24, 1718; *apud* Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iv., p. 530.

in it. The courteous and almost fulsome language in which we now indulge will only become tolerable to me—I am sure it will only become compatible with our self-respect—when we can, at least, communicate with those we flatter. We may recall with advantage S. John's counsel, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth."

3. Finally, there is the question which both the religious alienation of the people and the strife of the churches unite to propose, How can the Christian revelation be translated into the language of the modern world, and shown to be in harmony with the modern conscience? There are, I know, some persons who are offended at the very proposition of this question. They think it answer sufficient to return to the anxious inquiries of men, perplexed in mind and conscience by doctrines that seem to them plainly irrational and immoral, that the faith is unchangeable, "once for all delivered to the saints." I doubt if any verse in the Bible has been made to carry a heavier burden of bigotry than that verse of S. Jude. But I am not addressing myself to bigots, but to the loyal members of that great, free National Church which, as the Lutheran Mosheim said, "holds the first rank among the reformed churches."

The problem which faces us is no new problem in the history of the Church of Christ. At every epoch of transition it has made its appearance. The faith is God's "treasure," which we have "in earthen vessels," and those vessels follow the law of all earthly things: they

wear out and perish, and must be continually changed, and renewed. In the progressive development of mankind new truths are discovered: and these must be related with the Christian revelation if it is to retain its hold on men's minds and hearts. The faith has many times in the past been restated in deference to new truth. Our creeds are re-statements. "New wine must be put into new wine-skins." It needs no proving that we now stand as Christians confronted by a mass of new truth, as yet unrelated with the faith which we profess. The result is apparent in widespread distress of mind. Men are tempted to despair of Christianity, to say that it is one more dead religion laid by in the cemetery of human hope, to make shift to find in the doctrines of science some working substitute for the faith they have lost. Is the Church to stand by helpless and inactive while this great apostasy is consummated? Is she to mutter over the unregarded or even repulsive formulæ in which, with other notions and in other times, men phrased the truth they held? Or is the Church to fasten her faith where alone it is changeless: not in formulæ, however sacred; not in institutions, however venerable; not in activities, however beneficent; but in Him Who said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away"? Is she to gird herself anew for the great task by an act of faith in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, yea, and for ever"? Shall she not also in this "cloudy and dark day" of her proving "endure as seeing Him Who is invisible"?

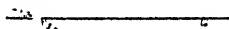
The Church of England is rich in large hopes and noble memories; and though the situation in which she now stands is plainly full of danger and difficulty, she cannot despair. On all hands there are the tokens of the presence within her of Divine life. She has the grace to confess and bewail her faults, to wrestle with her scandals, to seize her opportunities. The Holy Spirit is working plainly, gloriously, in her midst. This splendid church in which we are now assembled is eloquent of hope. More, far more, has gone to its building than the labour of the builders and the skill of the architect. Faith to undertake so great a venture; zeal to persevere in so extensive a work; love moving to sacrifice in order to find the means for such costly building — these “gifts of the Spirit” find here their visible expression: and for these most of all do we “thank God and take courage.” Will you allow a stranger to add his congratulation to the multitude of congratulations which to clergy and people have been coming on the practical achievement of this notable and magnificent venture? I am grateful for the privilege of being associated, in however lowly a capacity, with your joy: and I pray God to let His blessing rest evermore on this holy house. It is related of the saintly Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, that he wept when his new cathedral was finished. “We are diligent,” he said, “in piling up buildings made of stone, but are too negligent of those living temples which are the souls of men.” That was a natural reflection in those rude days when the mass of men lived in squalor and hardship, scourged by

the twin miseries of ignorance and oppression. In our time the antithesis is not so manifest between glorious churches and neglected people ; but, we may never wisely forget, even for one moment, that the whole value and power of a church consists in the worship and service to which it is ministerial. Only while we "see Him Who is invisible" do we rescue our church life from the stain of self-advertisement and the outrage of self-seeking. These evil things, alas, are too often present in our churches ; but here, by the grace of God, it shall not be so. This glorious church shall extend on every side the noble and wholesome influence of religion. Men will go forth from it moved to fight the Lord's battle against the various sin of the world where it faces them in common life ; the intercourse of the townsfolk in politics and business and pleasure will become a purer, worthier thing because here they have learned to see behind the march and pageantry of earth Him, the "Invisible," Who alone gives meaning and permanence to life : and the strangers seeking health and rest who in time to come shall visit this place shall feel, wherever they move, the influence of this house of God—

" As if the streets were consecrated ground,  
The city one vast temple."

## AN APPEAL FOR UNITY.

*Sermon preached on the 20th Sunday after Trinity, October 20th, 1901, in Great S. Mary's Church, Cambridge, before the University.*



THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD.—*S. John x. 16.*

MORE than four years ago the venerable Bishop of Rome issued an encyclical letter on the unity of the Church, which expressed, with a grace and fervour which would lend distinction to the most conventional opinions, a very ancient and a very mischievous error. The concluding section of that document is headed, "An Appeal to Sheep not of the Fold," and there the language of S. John's Gospel in the passage before us is made the basis of an urgent exhortation to all non-Roman Christians to accept the authority of the pope. With an audacity which, perhaps, habit has obscured or wholly concealed, the writer adopts the very language of Christ: "What Christ has said of Himself, We may truly repeat of Ourselves—'Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice.' Let all those, therefore, who detest the widespread irreligion of our times, and acknowledge and confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Saviour of

the human race, but who have wandered away far from the spouse, listen to our voice." I need not remind you that the text of S. John, when correctly read and justly considered, does not merely provide no basis for the papal claim, but categorically prohibits it. The unfortunate rendering of the Vulgate, which ignored the significant change from *αὐλή* in the first part of the paragraph to *ποιμνὴ* in its final clause has been a prolific root of error, and will for many generations yet confuse and mislead the minds of believers. Let me quote the well-known words in which a great Cambridge scholar, who was also one of the greatest of Anglican divines and bishops, has pointed out the gravity of the perversion thus inadvertently caused. I seize an occasion for naming Bishop Westcott in order that I also, a member of the sister university, may add one more expression of homage and gratitude to the great volume of witness which gathers about that holy and honoured name.

"The translation 'fold' for 'flock' (*ovile* for *grex*) has been most disastrous in idea and in influence. . . . The change in the original from 'fold' (*αὐλή*) to 'flock' (*ποιμνὴ*) is most striking, and reveals a new thought as to the future relations of Jew and Gentile. Elsewhere stress is laid upon their corporate union, and upon the admission of the Gentiles to the holy city; but here the bond of fellowship is shown to lie in the common relation to one Lord. The visible connexion of God with Israel was a type and pledge of this original and universal connexion. The unity of the church does not spring out of the extension of the old kingdom, but



is the spiritual antitype of that earthly figure. Nothing is said of one 'fold' under the new dispensation.

"It may be added" (he continues) "that the obliteration of this essential distinction between the 'fold' and the 'flock' in many of the later western versions of this passage indicates, as it appears, a tendency of Roman Christianity, and has served in no small degree to confirm and extend the false claims of the Roman see."

In his "Additional Note" Bishop Westcott expresses the fear that "it would perhaps be impossible for any correction now to do away with the effects which a translation undeniably false has produced on popular ecclesiastical ideas."

If proof were needed of the extraordinary hold which the mistaken conception of ecclesiastical unity implied in the Vulgate rendering has obtained on the minds of our own contemporaries, I might, perhaps, point to a curious and melancholy volume recently published, and attracting in some quarters a large measure of attention. This volume, which is commended to our notice by the well-known ecclesiastic who presides over the Roman Church in this country, professes to be a series of statements by "the more recent converts to the Catholic faith" as to the reasons which induced them to take the momentous step of changing their religious allegiance. It is far from my purpose to censure any individual for a proceeding which, however inexplicable to me, must be assumed to have been dictated by a sense of religious duty; but no man who volunteers his reasons for his action can complain of their being criticised; and I take leave, therefore, to say generally that the most part of

the reasons alleged in this book seem to reflect the dominating influence of that radical perversion as to the character of ecclesiastical unity, which, supporting itself on the unfortunate rendering of the Vulgate, has held its ground from the fourth century until our own time, and become the corner-stone of a vast fabric of ecclesiastical pretension. For the rest, this book moves me to sympathize with Jeremy Taylor's protest against proselytising in all its forms: "How few turn Lutherans, or Calvinists, or Roman Catholics from the religion either of their country or interest! Possibly two or three weak or interested, fantastic and easy, prejudicate and effeminate understandings pass from church to church, upon grounds as weak as those for which formerly they did dissent; and the same arguments are good or bad as exterior accidents or interior appetites shall determine. I deny not but, for great causes, some opinions are to be quitted; but when I consider how few do forsake any, and when any do, oftentimes they choose the wrong side, and they that take the righter, do it so by contingency, and the advantage also is so little, I believe that the triumphant persons have but small reason to please themselves in gaining proselytes, since their purchase is so small, and as inconsiderable to their triumph, as it is unprofitable to them who change for the worse or for the better upon unworthy motives. In all this there is nothing certain, nothing noble. But he that follows the work of God, that is, labours to gain souls, not to a sect and a sub-division, but to the Christian religion, that is, to the faith and obedience of the Lord Jesus, hath a promise to be assisted and rewarded; and all those that

go to heaven are the purchase of such undertakings, the fruit of such culture and labours ; for it is only a holy life that lands us there." <sup>1</sup>

"They shall become one flock, one Shepherd." There is no justification here for any ecclesiastical claim. The unity of disciples will not be a quasi-political unity—that is, an unity similar to that which exists in secular associations. External tokens, which none can mistake, will not mark off Christ's followers from the rest of men, albeit to those whose vision is cleansed His authenticating marks will be plain enough. You can label "folds" conveniently, and you can, to that extent, designate Christ's sheep, but He Himself denies in advance the competence of all such designations. His "flock" will be gathered from many "folds," when, at length, "folds" shall be dispensed with, and He will unite His own. So far our course is clear. We cannot find in the text the prophecy of the historic Catholic Church. The very mention of history calls us from the delusive lights of ecclesiastical theory to the steady and waxing illumination of experience. In the face of Christian history who can continue to befool himself with the dream of such a church as adorns the appeals of proselytisers and moves the rhapsody of neophytes?

"One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound,  
Entire, one solid, shining diamond :  
Not sparkles shatter'd into sects like you,  
One is the Church and must be to be true ;  
One central principle of unity.  
As undivided, so from errors free,  
As one in faith, so one in sanctity."

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<sup>1</sup> Dedication of *The Life of Christ*. Works, vol. ii., p. xii., Heber's ed.

## THE TEST OF MORAL RESULTS. 131

History applies to ideas and institutions the one test which Christ seems to authorise in the religious sphere, the test of moral results.

"By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." It has often astonished me that the moral argument against the doctrine of a politically united infallible church appears to weigh so little with those who change their religious profession. Trace that doctrine in history, and its condemnation lies on the surface. When first I began my clerical life I was brought much into contact with that popular secularism with which the names of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs Annie Besant were then commonly connected. I thought then, and I think still, that the one effective part of the secularist case was its challenge, on the basis of historic fact, of the moral effects of ecclesiastical Christianity. I have often tried, but never yet succeeded, in stating a satisfactory explanation of such protracted and frightful aberrations as, to give one notorious example which was incessantly pressed on my attention, religious persecution—an aberration, remember, which is domesticated in the practice of almost all churches, and established in the system of the greatest. Think of the moral associations of familiar ecclesiastical names and phrases. Make what allowance you will for the ignorance, fanaticism, and interest which attach, in varying degree, to the popular usage, and, even so, is it not full of melancholy suggestion that the words coined in the sanctuary should all carry to the general mind the

suggestion of some distinctive moral defect? Who can wholly separate "priest" from craft, and "prelate" from pride, and "inquisitor" from cruelty, and "proselytiser" from unscrupulous duplicity, and "casuistry" from immoral subtleties, and the "confessional" from intolerable suspicions? But are not all these terms more or less closely associated with that conception of the Church as an earthly kingdom, with well-defined limits of jurisdiction, and an exactly organized system of government, which has been most consistently followed and most completely realized within the Roman sphere? Is not the root of the long series of historic scandals the substitution of the notion of "one fold" for that of "one flock"?

"They shall become one flock, one shepherd." The unity of disciples will not be essentially external and political, yet it will be a force in the world which men must recognize and reckon with. In His great prayer before the Passion, Christ prayed for an unity which would be the standing witness to the world of the truth of His Divine claims. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." Does Christian history afford any help to the inquirer, who would fain learn in what sense the Saviour's prayer has been answered? Is there any recognizable unity of disciples which is unshadowed by historic scandals, which wakes no resentful memories, which provokes no hostile criticism, but answers to the aspiration of the

Master, and arrests the attention of mankind, and wins the homage of discipleship? Upon the answer to this question I apprehend that much depends. It is indeed easy to show the spiritual failure of the ecclesiastical system ; that sad testimony is writ large in the laws and literature of Christendom. But if we must stop there, if history is to yield no other witness, then it would seem impossible to retain our faith in the power of Christianity to redeem and regenerate society. I believe that we are not shut up to this terrible conclusion. History, in decisively condemning the political conception of the Catholic Church, does not drive us to a total bankruptcy of faith. There has been operative throughout the scandal-ridden centuries a subtle spiritual force, which has unified believers, and attracted men to discipleship. That force is the influence of Jesus Christ Himself upon disciples, and through disciples upon the mass of human life. There is an episode in the Gospel which might seem prophetic of the course of Christian history. The apostles were hot with a dispute about precedence, and Christ rebuked them by taking in His arms a little child and constituting him His true representative. "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name receiveth Me." Side by side the world has always to reckon with these contrasted missionaries: the quarrelling hierarchy, greedy of place and power, blind to the higher aspects of its own ministry, dead to the best possibilities of its own life; and the child-like saints, who have drawn back from the ignoble conflicts of ambition, and suffered Christ to preach in them His silent but eloquent message of

supernatural goodness. Let me give but one example, sufficiently notorious. The student of Christian history sees at one time the Borgia on the apostolic throne, wallowing in the filth of his sensuality within the sanctuary which he has made a sty, and Savonarola, disillusioned, deserted, and undone, writing in the intervals of reiterated tortures those meditations on the 51st Psalm of which the piety and pathos have moved men's consciences ever since, and even in our own time have attracted the devout study of a distinguished Cambridge scholar. In the moral sphere, age after age, Christ's words have found fulfilment.

"They shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd." A new thing has come to pass on the earth: the Christian character has been cast in the mould of the Gospel, and men everywhere have confessed its beauty. The most intractable human material has been found patient of Christ's workmanship; the most unkindly circumstances have not been able to arrest or prohibit His work.

It was a common practice of the older church historians to group their materials under certain broad headings. Thus Neander deals with his periods in three sections, of which the first treats of the external history of the Church, the second with the development of its constitution, the third with Christian life and worship. It is only in the last that there is a coherent and apparent unity. The relations of the Church and the world are continually changing. The ecclesiastical system has exhibited the common type of political development, and indeed has followed the model of the

State with curious exactness. The only uniform feature is the Christian character, with its inevitable expression in the Christian life. And the reason lies here: the Christian character is the creation of the personal influence of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, yea, and for ever." The Christian life always exhibits the same principles at work, and moves forward towards the same moral ideal. They are the principles of the life of Christ: the ideal is summed up in the classic phrase, "Imitatio Christi." Let me object that this moral unity, this unchanging Christ-likeness in character and life, is a rhetorical figment, or a doubtful inference from the Christian past, but not a plain and intelligible token by which here and now men may recognize and be led to Christ. On the contrary, it is the only "Note of the Church," which really serves these necessary ends. The one living Christian force among us is that of the Christian character expressed in the Christian life. Men are weary of theology; they are contemptuous of systems of discipline and worship; a hundred tokens show that they are deserting the churches, but they never fail to welcome and yield to the influence of Christian goodness. It matters strangely little what you preach, or how you worship, if the people among whom you work acknowledge in you that subtle, unearthly power which S. Paul calls "the Spirit of Jesus."

If you will permit me, I should like to put that before you as a personal conviction, bred in me by fifteen years of more or less close contact with the religious life of English folk in the poorer parts of London. I can recall



the names of many, most widely differing in standpoint, natural disposition, degree of education, methods of work, religious doctrine and denomination, whom I have observed winning the same success by the same moral force. I am not, of course, suggesting that all systems are equally sound, and all doctrines are equally true; but I am insisting on the fact that the one unity which experience certifies, the one evidence of Christianity which the general conscience owns, is not to be found in anything external, but only in the personal influence of Christian men. Christ's words to the seventy seem to have evident application to all His disciples as they move about their tasks in the world, and hold intercourse with their fellows in the manifold contacts of society: "He that heareth you heareth Me: and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me."

With these broad testimonies of Christian experience in our minds—on the one hand, the decisive condemnation of the politically conceived Catholic Church, and, on the other hand, the clear indication of moral excellence as the one invariable and demonstrative evidence of discipleship—we must face the ecclesiastical situation of our own time, and reconsider our ecclesiastical theory. The Christian society is seen to be properly ministerial to discipleship. It is the divinely ordained, divinely ordered instrument for bringing to bear on men, as long as the world shall last, the regenerating and educating influence of the living Christ. S. Paul is not setting forth the case of a rigid hierarchical constitution, but declaring the essential purpose of the Christian society as such, when he writes to the

Ephesians his glowing description of the Church of God : " And He gave some to be apostles ; and some prophets ; and some evangelists ; and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ : till we all attain unto the unity of the faith ; and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The Church answers to its purpose and justifies its existence when it creates the Christian character and inspires the Christian life. And these are its title-deeds to allegiance, and its demonstrations of origin. Where these are there is the Church, recognizable as such by the general conscience, and therefore approaching men with unquestioned authority, and receiving to its appeals the answering homage of their hearts. Where these are not, there is nothing more than the corpse of the Church. Christ Himself—let us never forget it—plainly contemplated the possibility of such spiritual death. His disciples, He said, were " the salt of the earth," but the " salt " might lose its " savour " and become worthless. " Occasions of stumbling " would come, but " Woe to that man through whom they came ! " Constantly this warning note is audible throughout the Gospel, and it is sustained in the Epistles. Evidently we must reverse the common order. Instead of judging Christians by the churches to which they belong, we ought to judge the churches by the Christians they produce. To societies not less than to individuals must Christ's authorized test be applied.

I venture to submit with all deference to you that

the time has fully come for us to revise our formal ecclesiastical theory in deference to considerations which unquestionably command the assent of our reason and of our conscience. I am not likely to forget that behind the existing divisions of the Christian society lie long and complicated histories. There are mountains of prejudice, unreason, bigotry, to overcome; mundane interests, as irrelevant as they are humiliating, are strangely interwoven with religious questions. Official self-importance in a hundred denominations is in perpetual league against every approach to an unity which could not fail to destroy many Stylites-pillars of self-advertising piety. The bustling business men of the churches, whose conception of spiritual success is borrowed from the counting-house, and whose methods of religious work are transplanted from the shop, will probably resent the proposal to lift church life on to a higher level than they know. It is much easier to acquiesce in a working system, though to do so involve the continued dominance of empty religious pretensions, and the hollow affirmation of obsolete ecclesiastical ideas. There is always a sphere for a good man's work, and this is an imperfect world at best. The virtues of good men, who accept and use the worn-out systems of conventional religion are as the ivy growing on a ruined tower, which makes beautiful a decay which it neither arrests nor conceals. The primary need of the hour is more religious honesty. In the classic phrase of Dr. Johnson, Churchmen beyond all others need "to clear their mind of cant." "Let love be without hypocrisy" is the kindred protest of S. Paul.

Bear with me while I bring these considerations to a very simple, indeed an obvious, application. On all hands there is talk of Christian unity. Not a conference or a congress of Churchmen meets without effusive welcome from Nonconformists. A few weeks ago I sat in the Congress Hall at Brighton and listened to a series of speeches by prominent Nonconformists, all expressing the warmest sentiments of Christian fraternity. I reflected that by the existing law and current practice of our Church all those excellent orators and their fellow-believers were spiritual outcasts; that, if they presented themselves for the sacrament of unity, they would be decisively rejected; that, in no consecrated building might their voices be heard from the pulpit, though all men—as in the case of Dr. Dale, of Birmingham—owned their conspicuous power and goodness. The contradiction came home to my conscience as an intolerable outrage; and I determined to say here to day, in this famous pulpit, to which your kindness has bidden me, what I had long been thinking—that the time has come for Churchmen to remove barriers for which they can no longer plead political utility, and which have behind them no sanctions in the best conscience and worthiest reason of our time. I remembered that in my study, at work in preparation of the sermons which expressed my obligation as a Christian teacher, I drew no invidious distinctions. Baxter and Jeremy Taylor, Dale and Gore, Ramsay and Lightfoot, Döllinger and Hort, George Adam Smith and Driver, Ritschl and Moberly, Fairbairn and Westcott, Bruce and Sanday, Liddon and Lacordaire—these, and many others of all

Christian churches, united without difficulty in the fellowship of sacred science. It was not otherwise in my devotions. Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Non-conformist were reconciled easily enough in the privacy of prayer and meditation. The two persons whom I venerated as the best Christians I knew, and to whom spiritually I owed most, were not Anglicans. Only in the sanctuary itself was the hideous discovery vouchsafed that they were outcasts from my fellowship. I might feed my mind with their wisdom, and kindle my devotion with their piety, and stir my conscience with their example, but I might not break bread with them at the table of our common Lord, nor bear their presence as teachers in the churches dedicated to His worship. It seemed to me that the love so lavishly expressed in that Congress Hall must, at least on our side, be a strangely hollow thing. It is true that the presiding Bishop reminded the Nonconformists that there were doctrinal differences which could not be forgotten or minimized; but this obstacle was effectually demolished by the debates of the congress—debates which revealed the widest possible doctrinal divergence between men who, none the less, communicated at the same altars, and owned allegiance to the same church.

I submit that in the interest of our self-respect the cruel and insulting contrasts which I have described should cease, that we should at least receive to Holy Communion those whom we hail with much ostentation as our fellow-disciples, to many of whom we are under such great spiritual obligations. Time was when the refusal to communicate came not from the Church,

but from the dissenters, and then the best Churchmen exerted themselves to persuade their separated brethren to unite with them in the sacrament of fellowship. It would seem that the obstacle to reunion is now on our side, and that in spite of the fact that the formal occasions of historic severance—doctrines more speculative than essential, differences of ecclesiastical order, objections as to the liturgy—have largely lost their meaning. The air is full of projects of church reform; the demand for ecclesiastical autonomy is commending itself as just to the multitudes whose religious ardour is out of all proportion to their knowledge or their sympathy. I wish I could persuade myself that our reformers had realized the probable consequences of the changes they advocate. For myself, I am free to confess that I dread every change which narrows the limits of the National Church by stricter denominational organization. No reform, to my thinking, deserves the name which does not tend to widen the membership of the Church of England, and draw within its pale all who, in S. Paul's phrase, "love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness." Fraternity between Christians which cannot express itself in a common participation in the sacrament of unity is an empty name. S. Paul's words about the Eucharist are a suggestive commentary on the prophecy of Christ: "We, who are many, are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread." "They shall become one flock, one Shepherd."

But here there is need of a caution. Our intolerance is official, expressed in our system. Its removal must

be official also. I desire explicitly to repudiate the suggestion that individual clergymen should, without other authority than their own sense of right, break the existing law. I would not have the sacred cause of Christian unity stained and compromised by ecclesiastical anarchy. My appeal is twofold. On the one hand, I address myself to all those fellow-Churchmen, lay and clerical, who feel the anomaly and scandal involved in the present exclusiveness of the National Church. I ask them to face the facts, to examine their consciences, to discover their convictions, to speak out their desires, and so to help towards the creation of a public opinion on the matter. On the other hand, I address myself with profound respect to their lordships the bishops. I ask them to take in hand this blessed task, to face this grave and solemn issue. They are the constituted rulers of the National Church in spiritual concerns. We revere them as, in no mere empty phrase, our fathers in God. In the first instance, and in special measure, this matter is in their hands. Let me remind them that in the records of episcopal government in this country there are illustrious precedents for the policy I implore them to adopt. If the tradition of Archbishop Leighton could at length replace that of Archbishop Laud, how much might the episcopal bench do, even at once, for the unification of Christ's church! And there is a nearer example. The late lamented Bishop of London, whose historic studies illuminated both Oxford and Cambridge, and gave exceptional authority to his practical judgments, did make a good beginning in this holy work, when he

declared his wish that Lutheran communicants should be admitted to the Holy Communion without the necessity of episcopal Confirmation. Why should not as much be conceded in the case of Presbyterians, and the members of the other organized and orthodox non-episcopal churches? But, I repeat, this is not a matter for unauthorized individual action, but for the National Church, acting constitutionally through the episcopate.



## THE CHURCH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE.

*Preached on All Saints' Day, 1901, in Westminster Abbey.*

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I HEARD THE NUMBER OF THEM WHICH WERE SEALED, A HUNDRED AND FORTY AND FOUR THOUSAND, SEALED OUT OF EVERY TRIBE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.—*Revelation vii. 4.*

THE writer of the Apocalypse, whether S. John or some other person, was clearly one whose mind was saturated with the prophetic literature of ancient Israel. He reproduces the thoughts and even the language of the prophets, for these had grown to be the accustomed furniture of his mind, the necessary forms in which his ideas were clothed. He pictures the Church to himself as the spiritual counterpart of Israel, and paints its fortunes in word-pictures directly copied from the pages of Israel's Scriptures. Thus the Church is always "the New Jerusalem," and false Christian teachers are sham Jews, "they which say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." The distinctive features of the great description of the spiritual city—its strength and beauty, its gates and foundations, its streets and temple—are all plainly suggested by the dear and familiar city on the Jewish hills. Such a description

could hardly have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem, or at least after the recollection of the city had faded from living memory. The worship of the triumphant church is evidently a transcript from the splendid ceremonial of the Temple on Mount Zion. Christ Himself is named in terms directly borrowed from the Old Testament, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." Nor is it only in describing the Church that the seer discovers an intensely Jewish habit of mind. When he would speak of the great oppressor of the church, he adopts the name of that proud city, which stood in the annals of ancient Israel as the very synonym of oppression. Imperial Rome, then at the height of its blood-stained magnificence, bending the almost limitless powers of its world-wide dominion to the task of crushing Christianity, is described as a harlot, bearing on her brow the legend, "Mystery, Babylon, the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth," and "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Since thus the name Jerusalem has been appropriated to the church, the actual city is referred to under a significant periphrasis as "the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified." In the text, then, we have an inspired description of the Christian Church. "I heard the number of them which were sealed : a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel."

On All Saints' Day it cannot be untimely, and I hope it will not prove unprofitable, to point you to an aspect

of the Church which is apt to fall into the background of Christian thought when the course of experience runs smoothly, but which comes into the forefront whenever unkindly fortunes drive Christians back upon their spiritual resources. Mostly we think and speak of the Church as we read of it in the page of history, or 'as we see it present before our eyes. We bewail its divisions, we denounce its crimes, we tremble at its follies. Side by side in eloquent contrast we set the sublime declarations of the Scripture and the squalid facts. We ask in fear, "Is this poor, distracted, scandal-ridden thing the heir of the promises, the genuine progeny of the apostles?" Does it indeed go forth on the path of its destinies strong in the pledge of its Divine Founder that against it "the gates of hell shall not prevail"? It seems that but one answer is possible, and that an absolute and scornful negative. But there is another standpoint, which as yet we may not gain, but which, in mercy to our weakness, we are permitted to know. The Church of history, the Church of our own observations, the Church of the abuses which shock and the conflicts which pain us—that Church, stained, divided, defeated, has another aspect, on which the eyes of God are fixed, and on which the clear light of heaven falls without shadow. Thus viewed, the envelope of scandal which wraps the Church we see falls aside, and the spiritual reality of its being stands revealed in order and beauty beyond compare. The seer was uplifted from the world, swept along by the spirit of Divine ecstasy, that he might see the vision, and whisper the sweet secret to his brethren. "I heard the number of

them which were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel." In the light of that fact the seer regards again the tumultuous scene which faced him in the world, and lo, on this also there has passed a high transfiguration. "After these things, I saw and beheld a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice saying, Salvation unto our God, which sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb."

The Church, then, as God sees it, as the seer described it, is a multitude numbered and sealed. The whole tale is complete; every member is separately known and marked. Of the whole body of disciples Christ's word holds good: "I manifested Thy Name unto the men Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy Word." Thus sharply and clearly in the Gospel is the line drawn between the Church as God knows and sees it and the world in the midst of which the Church lives to witness, to suffer, and to work. But the Church as men know and see it, the historic society, with its terms of "Communion" and its hierarchy of government, by no means corresponds with that divinely-recognized body. There is an invisible Church of which the historic society is at best but the symbol and the representative, which must never even in thought be too closely identified with it, which is God's secret

until the Judgment Day. Our Master taught us, by many solemn and searching words, not to forget this, not in our rashness and presumption to rebel against it, not to anticipate the final severance which, in due time, He Himself will make, by our futile, ignorant, unrighteous decisions. How many dark pages would never have darkened the record of Christianity, how many fearful oppressions would have been averted, how many obdurate stumbling-blocks would not now be cumbering the way to God, if but Christians had remembered that the task of disentangling the good elements from the bad, of rectifying ecclesiastical frontiers until all the righteous are within, and all the unrighteous without, the society of the Church, belongs to One who will not delegate it to any mortal. To the arrogance of the disciplinarian and the puritan He says, "Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest." He knows His own. That tangled scene where good and bad are mingled in a confusion at once inextricable and scandalous never screens for one instant from His eyes the crucial distinction—"The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His."

In these days of strife and division we need these warning words of Christ; we need to chasten our polemical ardour by the truth, so solemn and so searching, that polemics, even at their highest, move on a lower platform than that where man meets God; that the true and final test of discipleship is not in the sphere

of opinion, not even in that of formal belief, but always and everywhere in the sphere of conscience. There, in that solitude where no human eye observes nor human ear listens, Christ, the lord of conscience, makes His proposals to men, and receives their verdict on His claims. He keeps His own church roll, and finds His "jewels" in that day when He "makes up His treasure." In the book of life He records the names of His elect.

"I heard the number of them which were sealed: a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel." And can we know, can we in any measure have assurance, that on the roll of All Saints our names also are inscribed? We must ask the question, Am I among that countless multitude which God has exactly numbered, and which bears, in every one separately, His authenticating seal? There is no arrogance in the question; for we, not less than the illustrious heroes of Christian history, are "called to be saints." The Gospel knows nothing of "counsels of perfection" addressed to the members of a spiritual aristocracy. Within the family of God one character prevails, and one ideal is acknowledged. The noble names of famous saints are not as demigods in a heavenly court, beyond our hopes, but as the heralds of a course, which we too must run. "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith." No doubt

there is a profound truth in those sad lines of our Anglican poet :

“The gray-haired saint may fail at last,  
The surest guide a wanderer prove.  
Death only binds us fast  
To the bright shore of love.”

Yes ; we can never safely forget this ; we can never, so long as we are on earth, give ourselves up to the delusive sense of safety.

But even so, we are not wholly destitute of comfort ; we are not altogether abandoned to the fearful forebodings and cruel anxieties which fill our minds when we face seriously the problem of our eternal destiny. We cannot read the New Testament without finding there, everywhere latent, sometimes breaking through the language of counsel or argument into exultant declarations, the fact of religious certitude. It is authorized by our Master in the Gospel ; it is confessed by His apostles in their writings. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” “In the world ye have tribulation ; but be of good cheer : I have overcome the world.” S. John speaks of an interior certitude, which is a trustworthy pledge of final assurance. “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God” ; and S. Paul leads on his logic to a climax in the triumphant challenge, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?” Sixty generations of believers have subscribed these apostolic declarations. The note of confidence prevailing in the New Testament is everywhere audible

in the lives of the saints. In that confidence there is no trace of pride, no tincture of presumption, for it grows out of a fact—out of the fact which coloured their lives and made them saints, the fact of fellowship with the Divine Master. This is the authenticating mark of all saints, whether their names are inscribed on the calendars of Christendom, and honoured with the public homage of the Church, or have altogether perished from the memory of mankind; and are known only to Him who keeps the archives of time in His book of remembrance. We can recognize that mark, and we know that it is the *peculium* of no branch of the Visible Church, the distinction of no denomination of Christians. The Christ-likeness reflecting the habit of fellowship with Christ is God's token in the world, His silent, continuous witness to men.

On All Saints' Day, then, we think of nothing which separates or is in dispute. We forget controversy; we retire from conflict; we see the Church, as that seer in his vision saw it, in its Divine, eternal aspect, "the whole company of faithful people dispersed throughout the whole world"—yes, and not they only who, here on earth, are militant in the Lord's battle, but they also, not less, who have passed to their rest, and sleep in Jesus. The mighty heroes of the Christian centuries; the dear ones of personal experience; the estranged in external communion, who yet were one in heart and obedience; the unknown, who, in the shadows of obscurity, under the frowns of a world which was not worthy of them, yet "fought the good fight" and gained the deathless crown; the aged, passing to God with the



burden of their years upon them ; the vigorous, mysteriously called in the early maturity of their powers ; the "babes in Christ," nearest and dearest of all to the Good Shepherd's heart, who opened eyes on earth to close them in death, and open them again in the garden of God—all the saints are with us to-day, and join our worship. God knows them all, and us also, who, at so great a distance, are treading in their footsteps. "I heard the number of them which were sealed : a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel."

## CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT.

*Preached on the 22nd Sunday after Trinity, November 3rd, 1901,  
in Westminster Abbey.*

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A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER: EVEN AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YE ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YE ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.—*S. John* xiii. 34, 35.

AT the beginning of His ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ had bidden His disciples love their enemies: at the close of His ministry, in the final discourse which preceded His Passion, He bade them "love one another." In the earlier teaching He seems to depreciate mutual love of friends, as if it implied no extraordinary virtue—"If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" In the later teaching He exalts the mutual love of disciples as the true counterpart of His own love, and the standing witness to the world that His disciples are verily what they claim to be. The explanation of this apparently surprising difference lies, perhaps, partly in the different occasion and immediate purpose of Christ's speech, but mainly in the fact that between the first teaching and the last His ministry in the world

had run its course, His object in that ministry had been effected, the Church had come into existence, and therein the instrument by which He designed to secure the ends broadly sketched in the Sermon on the Mount. The solemnity of the occasion of Christ's final discourse, and the singularly impressive manner in which He declared His mind, must have arrested the attention of the Apostles, and cannot fail to attract the notice of every devout student of the Gospel. S. John does not record the institution of the Lord's Supper, which, at the time when he wrote his reminiscences of the Master, had for nearly two generations been the central and most solemn institution of the Christian society; but his narrative makes perfectly plain that the discourses, which in his own inimitable fashion, blending unconsciously his own meditations with the treasures of his memory, the ancient Apostle recorded were spoken in that upper room on Maundy Thursday, in connexion with the ordinance of the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. The symbolic feet-washing, in which the Master had rendered to His disciples the lowliest offices of menial service, had just taken place, and the heart-piercing appeal was yet ringing in their ears—"Ye call Me Master, and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." That dreadful episode had followed in which the grief-laden Master, whispering the sad secret of treason, there present at the table, had made His last approach to the traitor's heart, had spoken that dark

word of dismissal—"That thou doest, do quickly"—and had seen the door close for ever on "the son of perdition." Then was the time when Jesus Christ, relieved of the presence of Judas Iscariot, recovered His habitual calm, and thus addressed His followers: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come: so now I say unto you, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

The Gospel contains very few commandments of Christ. His Church had no "paper constitution"; its fundamental law was well described by S. James as "a law of liberty." For the unifying principle would not be obedience to unalterable statute, but free, loving discipleship to a living Master. Yet the Church would take rank as an organised polity in the movement of human civilisation; its primitive and essential unity, would be buried from view by more obvious, cogent, generally intelligible, bonds of cohesion; it would have a political development of its own, curiously similar to the normal political development of mundane societies. Therefore, it would happen that the highest truth of ecclesiastical life would tend to be obscured, and, indeed, to fade wholly from Christian minds. Notes of the true Church would be declared, and offered for the guidance of a doubtful and perplexed humanity, and as the ages passed, each one leaving behind some distinctive legacy of confusion and scandal, these arbitrary

tokens would be more and more insisted upon. Men would be summoned to accept as the essential character of Christ's Church some scheme of theology subtly articulated, and on all sides sheathed in the brazen armour of anathema, or some hierarchical constitution built on the rock of Divine right and endowed with the mystic powers and graces necessary for the religious life. Orthodoxies and hierarchies have played a great part in the history of Christianity, and the day is yet far distant when they will cease to play a great part. But the human spirit has always chafed under their dominance, and cried out for some better authentications of Christianity than they can offer. I misread altogether the signs of our time if that age-long protest is not now revealed by many pathetic and eloquent tokens. Religion cannot be made to hang on some tiresome antiquarian research into hierarchical pedigrees; eternal issues cannot be made to depend on an impossible intellectual agreement. Hierarchies and creeds may serve a useful purpose, and wield an authority very just and serviceable within certain practical limits; but both the one and the other are time-born, coloured by circumstance, and shaped by contingency, changing therefore from age to age, reflecting a thousand irrelevant influences; the essential and eternal truth may not be recognized in them. Men are appealing to an older authority; they are going behind the conflicting claims of systems and churches, and insisting on some clear guidance from the Master Himself. And they do not appeal in vain. Christ gives the longed-for sign. He authorizes one note of His Church, and empowers men

to seek the assurance of His presence by an intelligible token. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." The mutual love of disciples, inspired by and modelled on the love of Christ for them, expressing itself therefore in manifold and unselfish service, is the one note of the Church which Christ Himself certifies. It is the principle of that unity of all disciples for which He prayed, and which he designed to be the standing evidence to the world of His own Divine mission. The words of Christ's prayer ring in Christian ears as a solemn rebuke, a deep and pathetic protest. In the octave of All Saints, when our thoughts move out beyond conventional frontiers, and range at will over the whole expanse of sacred history, we may well recall the aspirations of the Redeemer: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one: even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."

Our Master, as I reminded you, had just instituted the sacrament of the Holy Communion. His words interpret, and are interpreted by, that sacred ordinance. The universal conscience and practice of mankind read into the physical acts of common eating and ~~common~~ drinking a certain moral significance. To eat and drink together implies the covenant of mutual friendship, and declares it publicly. The rudest savage confesses in this communion a sacramental efficacy, which he can only

forget at the cost of heinous guilt. This primitive faith survives even in the cynical and frivolous mind of the civilised man. He too respects a certain moral obligation suggested and secured by fellowship in the covenant of hospitality. Christ builds His sacrament on the substructure of this universal piety; but He raises and enriches it by a personal association. The bread broken in His consecrating hands and the Wine poured forth in His chalice are charged with a tender and deathless memory, and receive commission to yield an everlasting witness. Christian fellowship is to be expressed in a sacramental feast, which itself is inseparable in origin and idea from that death on the cross which was the supreme exhibition of the love of Christ.

There are other and not less important aspects of Holy Communion with which I have no present concern; but these lie on the surface, and were paramount in the apostolic age. The two related truths are affirmed by S. Paul in the earliest record of eucharistic doctrine which we possess: on the one hand, the assertion of Christian unity—"We, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread"; on the other hand, the perpetual proclamation of that death of Christ which gives life to the world—"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."

It may well arrest our attention that the love which Christ ordains to be the public attestation of discipleship is not an universal sentiment of philanthropy, but a domestic affection—the love of disciples for one another. We are very familiar with the one; we are

almost as unfamiliar with the other. But Christ knew human nature when He imposed His "new commandment." He knew that limitation of direct responsibility and recognition of specific obligations are the conditions of operative charity. Cosmopolitanism may inspire most admirable rhetoric, but it does not, as a fact of experience, move men to acts of self-sacrificing service. The Stoics of antiquity professed the most generous doctrines; but they acquiesced without difficulty in the brutal practice of pagan society. It is possible to find in the writings of Seneca and Epictetus very striking parallels to the altruistic teachings of Christianity; but when we pass from theory to conduct the gulf between the two systems is apparent. The Stoic had no recognised sphere in which to apply his theories. "His avowal of cosmopolitan principles, his tenet of religious equality, became inoperative, because the springs of sympathy, which alone could make them effective, had been frozen at their source. Where enthusiasm is a weakness, and love a delusion, such professions must necessarily be empty verbiage. The temper of stoicism was essentially aristocratic and exclusive in religion, as it was in politics. While professing the largest comprehension, it was practically the narrowest of all philosophical castes."<sup>1</sup> The same moral was pointed by the course of that resuscitated paganism which gave so distinctive and unpleasing an aspect to the French Revolution. The kindly traditions of family and neighbourhood, those local and personal loyalties which are the true springs

<sup>1</sup> Vide Bishop Lightfoot; *S. Paul and Seneca*, in *Philippians*, p. 322.



of genuine patriotism, withered and died before the pretentious doctrines of an universal philanthropy ; and to this day civic hatreds are nowhere so fierce and irrational as under the official proclamation of ' Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.' ”

Theoretical charity can only become practically serviceable by being disciplined in the school of actual sacrifice ; and, therefore, the interest of mankind requires the fraternity of Christians. The Church is designed to be an object-lesson to the world, as well as a school of character and a sphere for the exercise of charity. In the midst of disordered society, as it moves on the low plane of economic development, exhibiting in unrelieved repulsiveness the free play of selfish passions, the fierce and ruthless war of rival claims and interests, Christ has ordained that men shall have always before them the spectacle of regenerated society, in which the low, greedy instincts of human nature are bridled and conquered by the law of a common relationship ; where human character grows under the silent, secret influence of a Divine personality towards one supreme and perfect model ; where all the powers of human nature are discovered, developed, drawn into action, under the contagion and coercion of one Divine example ; where liberty should express itself in order, and order minister always to liberty ; where the completeness of self-development should be the consequence of utter self-surrender in service—where, in fine, a harmony should unite the interests of the individual and those of the society which claims him. Thus the Church would realize the ideal of the State, and interpret the aspirations of humanity. In an undone and distracted

world it would be "a city set on a hill," a beacon kindled by the hand of God, the promise, the pledge, the prophecy, of all the good that men have dared to hope for, or found courage to attempt.

The Church comes forth from its Founder to enter on its faithful progress through history with this message to deliver, with this claim to advance, with this character to maintain. All the world must take account of Christ's "new commandment," for it provides the standing evidence of His presence in the Church which bears His name, and professes to continue His ministry. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." In the first age of the Church the critical importance of the mutual love of Christians was recognized. S. Jerome preserves an anecdote of S. John which admirably illustrates this fact. In his last days, when he had to be carried into church, and was too old to speak for any length of time, the apostle used in addressing the congregation to repeat simply the old commandment, which yet is, indeed, always new, "Little children, love one another." Then, as ever since, Christians were impatient of that teaching. His disciples, weary of the continual repetition, asked why he always said this. "Because," he replied, "it is the Lord's commandment: and if it only be fulfilled, it is enough." Tertullian, in a famous passage of his "Apology," describes the impression made on the heathen by the mutual love of believers. They could

not understand it, and tried to explain it away on base assumptions, but too easy to their depraved habits. "‘See,’ say they, ‘how they love each other!’ for they themselves hate each other. ‘And see how ready they are to die for each other!’ for they themselves are more ready to slay each other.”<sup>1</sup>

Two centuries later than Tertullian a still more illustrious Christian—Chrysostom—describes the scandal caused to the heathen by the lovelessness of believers. His language is on many grounds very remarkable, and singularly apposite to the conditions of the modern Church. He is commenting on Christ’s “new commandment,” and the testimony which by obeying it Christians are to deliver to the world; and, after his practice, he draws on his intimate knowledge of the religious life of his time in order to illustrate the sacred text, and to press home on his hearers its practical lessons. “Miracles,” he says, “do not so much attract the heathen as the mode of life; and nothing so much causes a right life as love. . . . And with good reason. When one of them sees the greedy man, the plunderer, exhorting others to do the contrary, when he sees the man who was commanded to love even his enemies treating his very kindred like brutes, he will say that the words are folly. . . . We, we are the cause of their remaining in error. Their own doctrines they have long condemned, and in like manner they admire ours, but they are hindered by our mode of life.” S. Chrysostom goes on to say that it is vain to point out to the disgusted heathen the virtues of famous Christians of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Apology*, vol. i., p. 39.

former times. About them they are sceptical so long as the Christians whom they see and know are scandalously unworthy of their profession. "Wherefore," he concludes, "I fear lest some grievous thing come to pass, and we draw down upon us heavy vengeance from God."<sup>1</sup> What was true of the heathen multitude of Antioch at the end of the fourth century is not less true of the non-Christian multitudes of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. S. Chrysostom's terrible confession ought to be printed on every Christian's mind, and pressed home to every Christian's conscience: "We, we are the cause of their remaining in their error." In the octave of All Saints, when, with the Christian centuries before our eyes, we consider Christ's "new commandment," we are overwhelmed with shame and perplexity. "I will tell you plainly," said Maurice, "I find far greater difficulty in this commandment than in all the rest of the discourse. The Church has been trying to construe it for eighteen hundred years, and has succeeded miserably ill."<sup>2</sup>

Bear with me while I base on my sermon an earnest and affectionate appeal. Here in England, as we all acknowledge, our unhappy divisions are a sore scandal and an abiding stumbling-block. Must they continue for ever? Is a decent regret the whole of our duty with respect to them? Can we, members of the Church of England, do nothing, here and now, to remove the causes of historic separations, to mitigate the bitterness of ancient feuds, to recover touch with long-parted brethren, to

<sup>1</sup> Hom. lxxii., on S. John xiii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Gospel of S. John*, p. 363.

vindicate before a justly scornful, justly sceptical nation the fraternity of disciples? We are well used to genial and kindly speech; it is the fashion of our time, the courteous cant of a soft-mannered society; but what is it practically worth so long as we hold firmly to a theory and a discipline which put us out of fellowship with all the reformed Churches? Remember that our Divine Lord appointed the Holy Communion to be the symbol and the sustenance of Christian fraternity. No professions of mutual love are worth anything so long as they are consistent with a deliberate and sustained refusal to join in that sacrament of fellowship. Has not the time fully come when we should ask, in all earnestness, whether the spiritual isolation of the Church of England can be sustained by valid and sufficient reasons? For my part I declare to you solemnly that I have come to think that the frank recognition of the ordered and orthodox Protestant Churches is demanded of us by irresistible considerations of reason, of prudence, and of religion. Difficulties there are unquestionably in the way of so great a departure from the long-established tradition of Anglican exclusiveness; but I cannot and will not believe that, when once the duty is seen, the practical obstacles will be found insurmountable. In any case I have cleared my conscience and chosen my course. Here that choice is fitly declared. For Westminster Abbey is no merely denominational temple; it is designated by Providence to be the temple of Christian concord. Here the great Church beyond the Tweed received its Westminster Confession; here the scholars of the English-speaking Churches combined in

the long labour of revising the English Bible. Within these walls are gathered memorials of illustrious Non-conformists; and choir and clergy, as they pass to their daily worship, tread the stone which bears the honoured name of the Independent, Livingstone. "So long as Westminster Abbey"—I am borrowing the language of one whose memory is dear and fragrant in this place, Dean Stanley—"maintains its hold on the affections and respect of the English Church and nation, so long will it remain a standing proof that there is in the truest feelings of human nature, and in the noblest aspirations of religion, something deeper and broader than the partial judgments of the day and the technical distinctions of sects—even than the just, though it may for the moment be misplaced, indignation against the errors and sins of our brethren."<sup>1</sup>

Here then, by an indisputable right, and with obvious fitness, I ask you to think on these things, to search your conscience, to apply your understanding, to criticize your prejudices in the light of Christ's word and example, to speak with your fellow-Churchmen, to seek guidance from the Source of all wisdom, and so to create, as far as you can, an honest and courageous public opinion within the Church—that Church which carries always on its front this solemn, searching charge: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Westminster*, p. 354.

## CHRIST'S MISSION IN THE CHURCH.

*Preached on the 23rd Sunday after Trinity (Nov. 10th), 1901,  
on behalf of the East London Church Fund, in Westminster Abbey.*

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AND JESUS WENT ABOUT ALL THE CITIES AND THE VILLAGES, TEACHING IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES, AND PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, AND HEALING ALL MANNER OF DISEASE AND ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS. BUT WHEN HE SAW THE MULTITUDES, HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION FOR THEM, BECAUSE THEY WERE DISTRESSED AND SCATTERED, AS SHEEP NOT HAVING A SHEPHERD. THEN SAITH HE UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, THE HARVEST TRULY IS PLENTY, BUT THE LABOURERS ARE FEW. PRAY YE THEREFORE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, THAT HE SEND FORTH LABOURERS INTO HIS HARVEST. AND HE CALLED UNTO HIM HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES, AND GAVE THEM AUTHORITY OVER UNCLEAN SPIRITS, TO CAST THEM OUT, AND TO HEAL ALL MANNER OF DISEASE AND ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS.—*S. Matthew ix. 35 ; x. 1.*

THE Gospel is not only the charter of the Christian society, but also the authoritative statement of its purpose and work. The Church builds its spiritual claim on the recorded commission of a Divine founder, and recognizes its duty in His recorded example. Would we know the intention with which the Church exists in the world, the nature of the witness it is charged to bear to the generations as they succeed one another on the

stage of history, the quality of the influence it is to bring upon human life as it moves slowly forward in a perpetual but intermittent and various development, and the range of its activity in the mass of human society? We must find the answers to all these questions in those brief narratives which record the earthly life of Jesus Christ. The intention of that life is carried on to the life of the society of His disciples; His witness is renewed from age to age in the witness of the Church; the quality of His influence is properly the same as that of its influence; the range of its activity is the range of His. Christ's ministry is described by the evangelists in precisely the same terms as those in which they describe the ministry of His disciples. He preached "the gospel of the kingdom"; so did they. He "healed all manner of disease and all manner of sickness"; on them He bestowed authority and commission to do the same. Everywhere He "cast out devils"; they were empowered and commanded to do as much. Christ was at great pains to make clear to them the essential identity of their mission with His own. "He that heareth you, heareth Me," He said to the seventy, "and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth Me." So great was their authority! He pressed on them that inasmuch as their mission was also His, so must its loyal fulfilment involve them in similar worldly fortunes. Let them be on their guard against the kind of success which their powers would easily secure, and which would impair the eloquent likeness between Himself and them. "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his



master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

The famous legend, which, on the eve of S. Martin's festival, I may be pardoned for recalling, is clearly inspired by the conviction that there must be a correspondence between the outward aspect and fortunes of genuine Christians and those of Christ. Sulpicius Severus relates that the Evil One appeared to Martin clad in royal robes and with a diadem, and asked for the homage due to Christ. Martin's spiritual instinct, undeceived, declined to acknowledge him, and, when rebuked, he replied that it was not in that guise that he looked for Christ, but with the show of the wounds of the cross. Cardinal Newman's comment on this story is equally beautiful and suggestive. "I suppose it means in this day that Christ comes not in pride of intellect or reputation for philosophy. These are the glittering robes in which Satan is now arraying. Many spirits are abroad; more are issuing from the pit: the credentials which they display are the precious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, look hard at them, with Martin, in silence, and ask them for the print of the nails."<sup>1</sup>

S. John relates that on Easter evening the risen Christ appeared to the disciples, and laid on them a solemn charge, using words which declared the perpetuation of His mission in them: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Now, Christ's

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iii., p. 844, where this quotation is made.

mission, as revealed in His conduct, had a range co-extensive with human life. "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil," and those "works" were apparent not only in the spiritual and moral spheres, but also in the physical sphere. All the various misery of mankind, in all its strange ramifications, under all its wonderful disguises, came within the reach of Christ's redemptive action; in the last analysis the cruel, complex burden of an undone race had its origin in moral revolt; and, though this or that specific calamity might not rightly be connected with individual fault, yet the broad truth remained, the spring of all human wretchedness lay deep in the darkness of sin, and he who would be the world's comforter must first be its physician; he who would re-create society must first redeem man. Christ's redemptive mission, reaching down to the hidden roots of misery, and embracing all its developments—political, social, intellectual, physical—is the mission of His Church. His word to His disciples is still the same: "We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." But we must turn from theory to practice, from the sacred pages, from which shines unfailingly the tranquil glory of the world's Redeemer, to the soiled records of Christian experience. To-day we must be sternly, relentlessly practical, for we are confronted once more with an urgent and neglected duty.

East London, as we use the term in the pulpit, is less a geographical than an ethical and social term. It includes all that mass of congregated city folk who live,

broadly, under the same conditions; who are manual workers, skilled or unskilled; who are separated by a wide and, I fear, a widening gulf from the comfortable and cultivated sections of the people; who live in chronic anxiety lest by some economic crisis their employment shall suddenly fail, and with it their means of living and the securities of their civic self-respect; who are, in many cases, exposed to grave risks of life and limb, and whose normal length of years is considerably less than that of the classes above them in the order of society. This vast multitude of people, numbering, perhaps, if we include, as for my argument we are bound to do, the inhabitants of South London, and of London over the border, as well as those of East London—some three millions of souls—is for the most part a very recent and a very artificial aggregation. Seen from the outside by a superficial observer, it has an aspect of depressing sameness: everything seems to proceed on a dead level of monotonous and rather squalid activity; but seen from within, the effect on the observer is rather that of an astonishing and, so to say, wilful variety. The law of social aggregation which accumulates these vast multitudes works together with a law of social segregation which isolates class from class, trade from trade, interest from interest, nationality from nationality, creed from creed. There is a principle of caste which penetrates society from one end to the other, neutralizing the kindly influences of neighbourhood, and stereotyping the prejudices of men. At the bottom of society there is a lamentable collection of human wreckage, the “jetsam and flotsam” of the social sea, carried by its

winds and tides to the harbourage of the great city. One of the most cautious and careful of our social students, Mr. Charles Booth, to whose patient and devoted labour we are all greatly indebted, has described this bottommost class in the hierarchy of London life: "Their life is the life of savages, with vicissitudes of extreme hardship and occasional excess. . . . From these come the battered figures who slouch through the street, and play the beggar or the bully, or help to foul the record of the unemployed; these are the worst class of corner men, who hang round the doors of public-houses; the young men who spring forward on any chance to earn a copper; the ready materials for disorder when occasion serves. They render no useful service; they create no wealth; more often they destroy it. They degrade whatever they touch, and as individuals are perhaps incapable of improvement. They may be to some extent a necessary evil in every large city; but their numbers will be affected by the economical condition of the classes above them, and the discretion of 'the charitable world'; their way of life by the pressure of police supervision."<sup>1</sup>

This class of hereditary outcasts is continually fed from above. Every variety of failure in the superior classes of society tends to find its way to this Alsatia of the worthless. Drink, vice, misfortune, crime, are the recruiting sergeants of that doomed host. The only effectual way of dealing with this scandal and problem of our irreformable class is by arresting the stream of recruits from the classes above it. East London needs

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Life and Labour of the People*, vol. i., p. 38.

an arrestive agency, ubiquitous, ever-active, resourceful, which shall come between drink, vice, misfortune, crime, and the social abyss towards which their victims are inexorably carried. The higher you go in the hierarchy of life the more the individual counts for, the more amenable he is to agencies of reformation. You are not neglecting the criminal residuum when you bend your principal efforts to the rescue of those who are drifting into it.

East London, as every great aggregation of men, contains within it a multitude of morally broken folk, men and women who have lost heart and lost character, and who, if they are to escape an utter bankruptcy of their lives, need some regenerating, re-creating force which shall quicken and recover them. East London, when all is said, is an unkindly soil for the best things to grow in. Life is dull, toilsome, prosaic, even squalid. It is not favourable to the development of character; it is bad for the up-bringing of children. I notice that even our devoted clergy, who will certainly endure any personal hardships which their duty demands, eagerly seize the opportunity to desert the East End when their children begin to grow up. There is urgent need, then, of some inspiring, elevating influence which shall encourage men to resist the impressions of their environment, to rise above the traditions of society, and to move morally and spiritually towards worthier ideals than any native to their neighbourhood. East London wants discipline and unity. Into its bewildering movement there come continually, not in hundreds but in thousands, the immigrants from the country. They are drawn to the

great city by many forces, some known, some but dimly suspected. They come in the ardour of youthful hope, with youth's keen curiosity and fierce thirst for pleasure, and, we must add, with youth's perilous self-confidence and inevitable ignorance. They leave behind them in their ancestral villages the normal disciplines of life—home, and the kindly interest of neighbours, and the salutary deference for social superiors. At an age when these protective disciplines are most needed they are suddenly withdrawn. In this terrible city these exiles from home are amid strangers; they must make for themselves some substitute for all they have lost. Is it any marvel that in multitudes of cases they fall under the novel and exigent strain of their circumstances? I am speaking to those who can fill in the outlines of my speech from the resources of their own knowledge. You know how many a bright lad, many a pure maiden, the hope and pride of some simple rustic home, for whom parental prayers rise daily to the Eternal Father, about whom are gathered the tenderest love of mothers' hearts, are brought to destruction here. Caught up by the eager, multitudinous life of London, carried along by its depraved fashions, deluded by its base sophistries, deserted by its cynical indifference, what hope is there for them if there be not present and active in the scenes of peril an energy of discipline, of restoration, and of hope? East London, I said, is inwardly divided. Those multitudes are gathered into sections and parties, which are mutually ignorant, and therefore suspicious and hostile. There is no cohesion, because there is no confidence; and there is no

confidence because there is no common enthusiasm, no common sympathy. The social reformer laments, as the rock on which his benevolent projects are broken, this inveterate incoherence of our poorer people. There is need of some strong, patient, persistent force which shall make war against ignorance, which shall create confidence, which shall make cohesion possible, and thus provide the conditions of social regeneration.

Consider, I pray you, these grave and apparent necessities of city life. Arrestive agencies to intercept the falling; regenerating agencies to rescue and renew the fallen; disciplinary agencies to protect and order the incoming strangers; inspiring agencies to move men to break through the iron restraints of routine and rise above the demoralizing dulness of uncultured society; unifying agencies to discover some latent principle of common action, and to bind together the segregated sections of the community—where shall these blessed powers be found? At least we can be in no doubt where we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, were directed to find them. We turn to the Gospel and contemplate the Son of God, as He reviews the mingled life of sin-stricken humanity, and takes action to redeem it. "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." Is not that a just and pathetic description of our modern society? Would not Christ speak thus of our great city? Mark, then, His action. From the eloquent spectacle of human disorder and distress, He turns to His disciples, and constitutes them a commissioned Church. "Then saith

He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers unto His harvest." Immediately the evangelist records that solemn and momentous act from which the Christian Church has proceeded: "He called unto Him His twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." East London needs the Church of Christ.

Somewhere near the middle of the second century of our era an anonymous Christian thinker wrote a short apology for Christianity, which scholars know as "the Epistle to Diognetus." In this writing the Church is described as the "soul" of the world. "The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet itself holdeth the body together; so Christians are kept in the world as in a prison-house, and yet they themselves hold the world together."<sup>1</sup>

"They themselves hold the world together." I cannot find a truer or more striking description of the influence of the Church on the mass of human society. The significant metaphors by which Christ indicated the character and effect of His Church point in the same direction. In the corrupting carcase of a dying world Christians will be as "the salt"—restorative, preserving, salutary. In the darkness of suspicion and error Christians will be as "the light"—bringing security, guidance, and joy. Amid the panic and peril of distracted humanity Christians will be as "the city

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Ep. ad Diogn.*, c. 6.



set on a hill, which cannot be hid." Such was Christ's plan; and, if it must be confessed that the success which has attended it is poor and partial, it is obvious that the cause of comparative failure lies in the fact that Christ's plan has been misunderstood, and, in great measure, abandoned. The Church, too often, has accepted the principles and methods of the world, instead of impressing its own principles and methods on the world. Instead of unifying divided society, it has, too often, added a spurious consecration to its divisions, and poured into them the embittering poison of religious fanaticism.

The Master's word rings in our ears to-day as we face the alienated multitudes of Christendom: "Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!"

Yes, we cannot think without bitter shame of all we might be, and are not, in East London; yet, in spite of all scandals, even of this chronic and baleful stumbling-block of our unhappy and unnecessary divisions, the Church of Christ nowhere more plainly justifies its name than in those poor and crowded districts. I believe, more strongly than ever, in the value of the work carried on year in and year out by the clergy of the National Church in East London. That work is easily misjudged and underrated by casual and prejudiced observers; but no one who really knows the facts will think meanly of it. Grant that the churches are not crowded, that in many parishes they are nearly empty; does that fact prove that the Church is powerless and worthless? No one

who knows East London from inside will think so. In the life of that district three persons, clothed with the authority of the State itself, move and work among the people with an influence and an effect which are almost infinitely precious. The doctor, the schoolmaster, and the clergyman represent the paternal aspect of government on its gentler side, and all three are loved and respected by the people. The doctor and the schoolmaster may, or may not, live amid the scenes of their official work. The clergyman must do so, and therefore he commonly penetrates more deeply into the life of the people, and knows them more intimately. He is seen to be kind ; he is believed to be good ; he is felt to be right. The very vehemence with which clerical faults are denounced reveals the high standard of pastoral duty which the people have established in their minds. Nothing shocks the poor so much as a harsh, idle, self-indulgent clergyman, because, in common experience, the clergyman, whatever defects he may have of another sort, is at least kind, laborious, and unselfish. He knows the children by name, is almost always their recognised advocate and friend, is constantly active to bring into their homes some wholesome brightness, and into their lives some pure and, apart from his efforts, inaccessible pleasure. Wives and mothers know him as a true friend, and, in many cases, as a loyal champion. They seek his interference—I had almost said his protection—when the disastrous plague of drunkenness has penetrated the home, and the ties of love created at the altar of marriage are wearing thin and threatening to fail before that ruinous and seductive vice ; and they do

not seek in vain. The best working-men—those who feel the prevailing mischief of their life, and are moved to make some effort for better things—turn to the clergyman as their obvious and trusted ally and counsellor. They acknowledge that the very law of his official being is an unceasing warfare with those bold, insolent iniquities which desolate their life. My brethren, I am free to declare to you, with such authority as you will consent to admit in one who for fifteen years has been a student of, and for most of that time a worker in, East London, that the best interests of the popular life are bound up with the efficient working of the National Church in that district. Doctors and schoolmasters will not fail there, because the State accepts the obligation of providing them; but with the clergy the case is otherwise. The State declines any similar responsibility in their case, and their provision is wholly left to the generosity of the Christian public. To you, then, as patriots, as philanthropists, as social reformers, as Christians, I make appeal on behalf of the Church in East London.

And here you will permit me to digress a moment in order to express the deep satisfaction with which English Christians everywhere will receive the announcement that one who for nearly seven years has, from this famous pulpit and in this central shrine of English Christianity, fulfilled his ministry as a great spiritual teacher and preacher, has been called to the government of a large and most difficult diocese, which includes within it problems of civic life only less formidable than those of East London. The loss of Westminster is the

gain of the whole Church, and, therefore, we cannot allow our personal regret to isolate us from the general joy. The seven years of various and unremitted work in this place have not been in vain. They have added a distinct and salutary tradition to the accumulated memories of Westminster, and set a standard of canonical duty which for years to come will influence for good the life of this Society. Pardon me if I speak the language of personal friendship. It is just seventeen years since, as a young graduate, I made the acquaintance of Charles Gore, and every year since has deepened the affection and increased the respect with which he then inspired me. I thank God that his ripe learning and splendid natural gifts will enrich the episcopal bench. I thank God that the great population of the Midlands will henceforth see in the principal seat of spiritual authority one who commends his message by fearless honesty, apostolic zeal, and personal sanctity. I believe—nay, I confidently expect—that, if God in mercy to His Church grant strength and years, the episcopate which is about to begin in the diocese of Worcester will take rank in our ecclesiastical record as in a rare degree illustrious and fruitful.

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest.” Never, surely, did these words of Christ command weightier sanctions in the knowledge and circumstances of Christians. Every year the mass of undisciplined humanity grows on our hands; every year a heavier burden of responsibility is laid on the English people.

The moral quality of our popular life reflects itself by a swift and inevitable movement over the vast expanse of our empire. Here at home, in the conditions under which our people grow up, think, work, live, lies the decisive factor of imperial politics. In the last analysis everything comes back to this crucial matter of character. Our traditions of civic liberty and our system of popular government depend for their whole worth on the moral fibre and judgment of the people. "A perfect democracy," said Edmund Burke, "is the most shameless thing in the world," and he drew the inference that a democracy needed the witness and discipline of the National Church. Its shamelessness would be checked by the convictions of the people. "When they are habitually convinced that no evil can be acceptable, either in the act or the permission, to Him Whose essence is good, they will be better able to extirpate out of the minds of all magistrates, civil, ecclesiastical, or military, anything that bears the least resemblance to a proud and lawless domination."<sup>1</sup>

I pray you, then, in the high interest of the national character, upon which depends the good government of the vast populations of the empire, to exert yourselves to maintain and extend the work of Christ's Church in our great city. Give this day with earnest purpose and a ready mind to this sacred cause, remembering Who it is that laid the charge of the world's rescue on His disciples, and therein in measure on you.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Works*, vol. iii., pp. 355, 356.

## PROSELYTISING.

*Preached on the 24th Sunday after Trinity, November 17th, 1901,  
in Westminster Abbey.*

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WOE UNTO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES ! FOR YE COMPASS SEA AND LAND TO MAKE ONE PROSELYTE, AND WHEN HE IS BECOME SO, YE MAKE HIM TWOFOLD MORE A SON OF HELL THAN YOURSELVES.—*S. Matthew* xxiii. 15.

GO YE THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS.—*S. Matthew* xxviii. 19.

AT first sight this anathema of Christ upon the proselytising zeal of His contemporaries strikes us as somewhat surprising. When He condemns pharisaic exclusiveness, ostentation, scrupulosity, externalism, and intolerance, He commands the prompt and unreserved approval of our consciences. But surely there is something to be said for the passionate ardour with which those zealots strove to bring men into the true Church, to place them in covenant relationship with the true and only God. Might it not, with plausibility, be urged that this unwearied and ubiquitous missionary activity was some counterweight to the gross and evident faults of the Pharisees? Nay, does not Christ Himself require of His disciples the very zeal which He censures in

these Jews? Is it not a Christian duty to "compass sea and land to make one proselyte"? and is that not the assumption on which the missionary efforts of the Church are justified? How else in truth is Christ's commission to be carried out in the world, and "all nations" brought to discipleship? It is sufficiently evident that we ought to examine with care what it is that our Lord condemned in the scribes and Pharisees, and what He required of His disciples; or, in other words, that we should discover wherein the difference lies between true and false missionary zeal, between proselytising and making disciples. For we cannot pretend to be ignorant that "proselytising" among us, in the heart of Christendom, is a heavily-suspected thing; the word itself carries to the general mind associations of scandal which are profoundly humiliating, and in common parlance it is a term of reproach. Wherein, then, lay the guilt of pharisaic proselytising? Lightfoot, the great rabbinist of the seventeenth century, whose works yet retain their value, understands that Christ in this anathema was condemning a particularly odious form of covetousness. His comment on the text is interesting. After pointing out the contemptuous attitude which the Pharisees maintained towards their proselytes, he thus proceeds:—

"Yet in making of these, they used their utmost endeavours, for the sake of their own gain, that they might, some way or other, drain their purses, after they had drawn them in under the show of religion, or make some use or benefit to themselves by them. The same covetousness, therefore, under a veil of hypocrisy, in

'devouring widows,' which our Saviour had condemned in the former clause. He also condemns in hunting after proselytes, which the scribes and Pharisees were at all kinds of pains to bring over to them. Not that they cared for proselytes, whom they accounted as a 'scab and plague,' but that the more they could draw over to their religion, the greater draught they should have for gain, and the more purses to fish in. These, therefore, being so proselyted, 'they make doubly more the children of hell than themselves.' For when they had drawn them into their net,—having got their prey, they were no farther concerned what became of them, so they got some benefit from them. They might perish in ignorance, superstition, atheism, and all kind of wickedness; this was no matter of concern to the scribes and Pharisees; only let them remain in Judaism, that they might lord it over their consciences and purses."<sup>1</sup>

The great puritan scholar was living in a time of ecclesiastical confusion, when in all directions unscrupulous adventurers were using the name and pretence of religion as the cloak of sordid self-seeking, and even of infamous profligacy, and his experience is reflected in the words I have read.

But I do not think our Saviour was referring merely or mainly to such gross spiritual imposture. We have good reason to know that the Jewish church as a whole in our Saviour's time was inspired by proselytising ardour. Horace satirises the zeal of the Jewish missionaries, and Josephus boasts of their success. The witness of the New Testament is confirmed by the contemporary

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Works*, vol. xi., p. 282. London: 1823.



literature.<sup>1</sup> Christian experience, however, provides the best commentary on the words of Christ. The history of the Church records the rise, progress, and dominance of the very temper which Christ condemned in the Pharisees, and His stern language is on the lips of men to-day, as they resent the intrusion, or strive to restrain the excesses, of Christian proselytising: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte: and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves."

Our Saviour condemns the methods and the results of pharisaic proselytising. The furious zeal, the untiring persistence, the unscrupulous methods of a despiritualised churchmanship which has left indelible blots on every page of the Church's record, are gathered up in the striking phrase, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte"; and the miserable moral effects of such perverted proselytising, effects which, in many cases, seem to proceed to the length of irreparable moral confusion, are sketched in the terrific declaration, "when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves."

I have used an expression which I think gives us the distinction we are in search of—the distinction between a true and a false missionary zeal. A despiritualised churchmanship is the inevitable consequence of that external political conception of the Church which has prevailed so generally among Christians, and always

<sup>1</sup> The evidence is collected in Schürer: *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, div. ii., vol. ii., p. 297, f. E.T.

with lamentable results to life and character. Our Saviour solemnly repudiated in advance this view of His Church. "The generation to which He made His revelation had been trained in religious materialism—they looked for a messianic kingdom identical in essence and form with the kingdoms of the world, and they counted on the glory and profit naturally attaching to a position of authority and privilege in it. Against this religious materialism Christ continually protested. "The kingdom of God," He said to the Pharisees, "cometh not with observation, neither shall men say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." And in the climax of His passion, standing before the governor, in full view of the Cross, He reaffirmed the great thesis: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence." The protest of Christ remains on record, and we read it now as a satire on His Church: for it is known to all men that the Church almost at once reverted to that religious materialism against which it was ordained to be the perpetual protest. The Old Testament ousted the New. The Christian ministry was declared the lineal successor of the levitical; the exclusiveness of the circumcised nation was transferred to the baptized society; the language of the gospels and epistles with respect to the subjects of the spiritual kingdom, the saints, the believers, the elect, was boldly applied to those whose Christianity had no other authentication than their membership in the visible Catholic Church. *Extra*

*ecclesiam nulla salus* became the keynote of Christianity ; not " Jesus Christ and Him Crucified," as with S. Paul, or, as with S. John, the simple, stately message of Divine self-revelation expressed and interpreted in the contagious love of the Incarnate Son of God.

As the Church sank into the common category of political societies, so the methods of its expansion took the political colour. The essential matter was to extend the frontiers of the kingdom by the most effectual means. The motives of surrender mattered little, so long as surrender were secured. The cynical practicalness of earthly statecraft usurped the name of Christian zeal ; the warfare of the spirit was degraded into an ignoble conflict on equal terms with rival secular politics. Proselytising, as we understand the term, is the synonym for unscrupulousness. If, with Christian history a sour teacher, we were to collect the distinguishing characteristics of proselytising, we should agree that three were invariable : (1) First of all, a thorough-going contempt for the individual conscience. The proselytiser seeks but one end—the conquest of men for his church ; and he pursues it with reckless indifference to the moral injury he may incidentally inflict on his converts. In his eagerness to win his object he does not scruple to suggest doubts which he cannot afterwards remove. He destroys convictions which stand in his way, but at the cost of character. He brings his convert into his church, but at the price of his religion. Like an eager and ruthless boy pursuing some gorgeous butterfly, he strikes so hard and so often, that his prize is ruined in the gaining. And then (2) inevitably, the proselytiser is tempted not

merely to abuse influence which is rightly his, but also to clutch at other influence which he has no right to use.

Why should I dwell on the miserable fact of persecution? It has no roots in the Gospel of Christ. When Augustine wanted to find scriptural basis for the method of physical coercion in spiritual causes, he had to make shift with twisting a single sentence from an irrelevant parable. Historically, it is part of the disastrous reflex action of the world on the Church, an evidence, only one among many, of religious materialism. But I shall be told that persecution is an old story, a nightmare of the dark ages, which may well be suffered to fall into the limbo of oblivion. Let it be granted that the proselytiser will never again have at his disposal the sword of the civil magistrate; that even Roman orthodoxy does not now believe that the Infallible Pontiff gave a useful lead to Christendom, in respect either of faith or of morals, when he ordered medals to be struck and *Te Deums* to be sung for the massacre of S. Bartholomew. Let us try to forget the murderous ravings of the clerical press in France during the long tragedy of Dreyfus, and assume, if we can, that the self-banished exiles now arriving on our shores from that country are as guileless and deserving as they say they are. Persecution is only one form of undue influence; there are other forms less cruel, but, perhaps, not less degrading, which I make bold to say are prevalent among us. Have you never heard of the petty tyranny of abused authority in village schools? or of the pressure put on working-men by Nonconformist foremen? or of

custom promised or withheld to the struggling shopkeeper as the price or the penalty of his religious behaviour? or of promotion in the hierarchies of commerce going by favour of denominational interest? or of the thousand-and-one little iniquitous discriminations by which it is attempted to coerce men's consciences by their interests? No church is guiltless in this matter. And I am sure the Church of England, justly considered, is not specially guilty; but in its measure it is guilty too, and we must face the fact. Undue influence in all its forms, from the extreme outrage of persecution to the possibly well-intentioned pressure of kindly folk, may exist, and has existed, under other conditions; but I am very sure that the materialised conception of the Church which inspires the proselytising condemned by Christ has been in the past, and is now, its most fruitful and persistent condition. Historically, it is certain that the readiness to coerce into submission has been the invariable mark of the proselytiser; and the result may be stated in the striking sentence of Walter Bagehot: "Persecution in intellectual countries produces a superficial conformity, but also underneath an intense, incessant, implacable doubt."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Once more, the proselytiser always magnifies the official aspects of the church. He exaggerates the virtue of sacraments, and exalts the powers of the hierarchy; he is relentlessly orthodox, and his doctrine is marked by an unblenching certitude. What need to multiply words? I am drawing the portrait of a familiar, too familiar, figure of our time.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Literary Studies*, vol. ii., p. 435.

The scribes and Pharisees made proselytes of the heathen; but, as we use the word, not heathen, but fellow-Christians are the objects of proselytising zeal. I submit to you that this proselytising of Christians among Christians is a profanation and an absurdity. It breeds an endless series of mischiefs—anarchy and undutifulness in families, divisions between neighbours, the bitterest resentments against individuals, every kind of evil-speaking and uncharity; and, the more I consider the matter, the more evident it becomes to me that not only is such domestic proselytising not required of us, but it is even prohibited by our obligation to "make disciples." For a fellow-Christian, however misguided and ill-informed, is yet a disciple of Christ, entitled by that fact to the privileges of fraternity. He is sheltered from the insult of proselytising by Christ's word, "One is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren." It is of him that S. Paul wrote: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, yet not to doubtful disputations. . . . Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own master he standeth or falleth."

Contrast with the proselytising which I have attempted to describe the high commission which we have received. Our Master has laid this charge upon us, basing it on the fact of His own universal and everlasting supremacy: "Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." In other words, the very work on which He Himself had been engaged during His ministry on earth, of which the fruit was that company of disciples to whom

He gave His charge, that work of drawing men to His side, inspiring them with love for Himself, moving them to enter into His mind, to accept His standpoints, to share His enthusiasm, to follow in His steps—that work, and none other, was to be perpetuated in those disciples and their successors, so long as the world endured. And as the work was the same, so must the methods of working be essentially the same, and the consequences of success. The *raison d'être* of the Church in the world is to make men disciples of Jesus Christ; and if that primary and governing purpose fall into the background of the Church's mind, if—intoxicated with success, enamoured of power, self-deluded by the manifold movement of its own life—the Church comes to labour for itself, to make claims on its own behalf, to judge men according to their treatment of those claims, then it has exchanged Christ's work of making disciples for the pharisaic work of making proselytes, which Christ condemned. That Church may exhibit all the conventional signs of mundane success; it may exult in the prosperity of its institutions, and the ubiquitous activity of its officials; it may proudly parade its statistics of progress and count up the waxing number of its converts; its "year book" may grow yearly a more substantial and amazing record; all men may speak well of it; nevertheless that Church has the sentence of spiritual death written on its brow, and Christ's anathema resting on its pride: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves."

## CREED OF THE EVANGELIST 191

I submit to you that the commission to make disciples prohibits proselytising of Christians among Christians. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is the proselytiser's creed, and the *ecclesia* is always his own section of the Lord's host. The creed of the evangelist is indeed different. S. Paul declared it when he wrote to the Corinthians his memorable descriptions of his ministerial work, which should be hung on the walls of every clergyman's study, and written above every Christian pulpit: "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. . . . For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Across the lines of proselytising zeal runs this searching and luminous sentence, which invalidates the confident declarations and mechanical certitudes of religious materialism: "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Above the ever-lengthening credenda of despiritualised Christianity, prohibiting the arbitrary orthodoxies of Christian history, and condemning the narrower terms of communion, which the churches would manufacture and enforce, stands this generous and comprehensive apostolic declaration: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness."

But we have to face Christendom as it is, not as it ought to be. Here in England religious opinion on a



thousand issues, some of them very important issues, is deeply divided. There are several churches variously governed, and many little societies hardly governed at all, which it would be an abuse of language to call churches, and which could hardly provide an adequate and wholesome discipline, moral and intellectual, for any Christian. It cannot but be the case that, as men grow to their mental and spiritual maturity, they should demand and seek a satisfying and satisfactory fellowship with their religious kindred. There will be a movement from the inferior to the superior societies of Christians. Is not that movement as legitimate as it is natural and salutary? How, then, can the churches avoid the necessity of proselytising among Christians? My answer is twofold. On the one hand, frankly admitting the lamentable facts, and confessing that much which in itself is evil must be endured in an abnormal and diseased state of the Church, I allow the rightfulness and indeed the necessity of accepting to membership those who in conscience are moved to leave the religious denomination in which they have been bred up. S. Paul's principle applies in such cases, "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind." On the other hand, I would deprecate all direct and conscious proselytising action; I would habitually centre attention on the essential fact of a discipleship to one Divine Master, which is certainly, apparently, admittedly, compatible with membership in most, perhaps in all, the sects and denominations which bear His Name. Nor is that all, though that is much. I believe the time is ripe for a further step, which, as you all know, I stand here

to advocate and defend. The time has come for the National Church to enter into a federation of fraternity, necessarily expressed by inter-communion, with all the ordered and orthodox non-episcopal churches. With the episcopal churches of Rome and the East, as I understand the situation, we are already potentially in communion, for we recognize them as true churches of Christ, openly profess our desire for fraternal relations with them, and are only restrained therefrom by the exclusive attitude which they maintain. I believe that in an atmosphere of genuine Christian fraternity, based on the common discipleship to one Divine Lord and Master, expressed in common reception of the Holy Communion, and tested in a hundred blessed co-operations, the less worthy understandings of His service and the unwholesome separatism which they inspire and sustain, would lose their hold on devout minds and gradually die out. They owe their present strength, in no small degree, to our irrational and mischievous exclusiveness, and to the suspicions and rankling resentments which are the unfailing consequences of pharisaic proselytising within the Christian society.

## SUPERSTITION.

*Preached on the 25th Sunday after Trinity, November 24th, 1901,  
in Westminster Abbey.*

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WOE UNTO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES ! FOR YE TITHE MINT AND ANISE AND CUMMIN, AND HAVE LEFT UNDONE THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW, JUDGMENT AND MERCY, AND FAITH : BUT THESE YE OUGHT TO HAVE DONE, AND NOT TO HAVE LEFT THE OTHER UNDONE. YE BLIND GUIDES, WHICH STRAIN OUT THE GNAT, AND SWALLOW THE CAMEL.—*S. Matthew xxiii. 23-24.*

WILLIAM LAW, the famous Nonjuring mystic of the eighteenth century, was wont to press the sinister resemblance between the Jewish Church, against which Christ launched His anathemas, and the Church which claimed for itself the name and commission of Christ. "This sect of the Pharisees," he says, "did not cease with the Jewish Church ; it only lost its old name ; it is still in being and springs now in the same manner from the gospel, as it did then from the law ; it has the same place, lives the same life, does the same work, minds the same things, has the same goodness at heart, has the same religious honour and claim to piety in the Christian as it had in the Jewish Church : and as much mistakes the depths of the mystery of the Gospel, as that sect mistook the mystery signified by the letter of

the law and the prophets.”<sup>1</sup> William Law did but follow the general practice of religious men chafing under the pharisaism of the Church, and I place his words at the beginning of my sermon in order to explain, and in some sense justify, the choice of Christ’s censure on pharisaic superstition, as the text of a discourse addressed to Christians. The superstition of these Jews consisted not in their religious practice, which our Saviour approved, but in their perverted sense of moral proportion, which permitted them to be at once punctilious about the performance of ceremonial duties, and neglectful of moral dispositions. The tithing of herbs was no part of Mosaic law, but an ordinance of the rabbis, a pious custom which had received ecclesiastical sanction, part of “the tradition of the elders.” Christ does not therefore condemn it, or authorize its neglect. “These ye ought to have done,” He said, illustrating thus the respect which He commanded, and in His own conduct displayed, towards the constituted ecclesiastical authorities. “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.” It is a common assumption, but not on that account the less unwarrantable, that a reverent solicitude about religious ceremonial and discipline is necessarily superstitious; it is well therefore to notice that Christ definitely approved the tithing of mint and anise and cummin, and based His censure on a temper of moral obtuseness which is as

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Works*, vol. ix. p. 186.

compatible with the utmost puritanic severity as with punctilious Catholic traditionalism. Thorndike was entitled to ask of his religious opponents, who denounced the system of the Church of England as superstitious and unauthorised of God, "May there not be superstition and will-worship in abhorring as well as in observing human constitutions?"<sup>1</sup> Are there not many vehement zealots among us, who claim for themselves an exceptional ardour against superstition, to whom Bacon's protest against the superstition of reaction may well be commended? "There is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think to do best if they go furthest from the superstition formerly received; therefore care would be had that (as it fareth in ill purgings) the good be not taken away with the bad, which commonly is done when the people is the reformer."<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that care is necessary if we would rightly distinguish the guilty superstition which Christ condemned, from the conventional and sometimes harmless religious phenomena which are vulgarly described as superstitious. A sentence of Richard Hooker will indicate for us the essential character of superstition. "Superstition is, when things are either abhorred or observed with a zealous, or fearful, but erroneous relation to God."<sup>3</sup> We are led to the doctrine about God which 'superstition implies. That doctrine is essentially either non-moral or immoral, and expresses

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Works*, I. ii. p. 531. Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Essays*, p. 122, ed. Reynolds.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide Eccles. Pol.*, bk. v. ch. iii. 2.

itself inevitably in fatuous or demoralizing religious observances. Hence the long train of miserable consequences historically associated with superstition: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*.<sup>1</sup> That bitter thought was suggested by the excesses of non-Christian fanaticism, but the Roman poet would not have written otherwise had he lived in our own time. Nay, whole chapters of Christian history are little more than illustrations of the words of Lucretius.

Appalled by the havoc of superstition, even religious men, both in ancient and modern times, have considered atheism itself a lesser evil. "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation; all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not: but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men."<sup>2</sup> Channing was right when he said that the interests of morality were concerned in a worthy doctrine about God. "Around just views of the Divine character all truths and all virtues naturally gather; and although some minds of native irrepressible vigour may rise to greatness in spite of dishonourable conceptions of God, yet, as a general rule, human nature cannot spread to its just and full proportions under their appalling, enslaving, heart-withering control."<sup>3</sup> Hence the Hebrew prophets held theology and morals firmly together; as they taught a worthier doctrine about God, so they insisted on a worthier conception

<sup>1</sup> *Lucretius*, i. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Bacon, *l.c.* p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide Complete Works*, 10th thousand, p. 192.

of man's religious duty. They argued from the intuitions of conscience to a supremely righteous person, from whom those intuitions came; and once having secured firm hold of that cardinal truth that God is the "Holy One," writing His commandments on "the fleshy tablets of the heart," they made their creed the criterion of worship and conduct. In a memorable passage, the prophet Micah represents Balak, king of Moab, as inquiring of Balaam by what means he might win the Divine favour: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" That is the question to which religion professes to give answer. Balak proposes the divers suggestions of current superstition: "Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" How the suggestions grow darker as the terror of superstition comes over the questioner's mind! And then the prophet makes answer in that simple, stately appeal to conscience, which has been called by a distinguished living teacher the greatest saying of the Old Testament:<sup>1</sup> "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Superstition implies losing touch with the first principles of religion, and necessarily involves its victims

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith in *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. i. p. 425, *Expositor's Bible*.

in disastrous moral confusion. This moral confusion reflects itself in religious practice, and then, by an inevitable reciprocity, the religious practice reacts on the character and understanding with ruinous effect, until moral obliquity hardens into unalterable perversion, and in the solemn phrase of the Gospel, "the light that is in men becomes darkness." The process may be recognized by unailing tests, which Christian experience abundantly authenticates.

I. Within the sphere of individual life and character superstition has always revealed itself by irrational fears, by stunted sympathies, and, too often, by moral declension. Robert Hall, the great Baptist preacher of the early nineteenth century, spoke the truth, and spoke it well, when he said of superstition, that "placing religion, which is most foreign to its nature, in depending for acceptance with God on absurd penances or unmeaning ceremonies, it resigns the understanding to ignorance and the heart to insensibility."<sup>1</sup> Christian experience, both in ancient and modern times, bears witness to the mental misery caused by this religious disease. It has its raw material, if I may use that homely phrase, in that fear which is deeply implanted in our nature, and which finds its justification in our weakness and folly. A sacred writer tells us that "fear is nothing else but a surrender of the succours which reason offereth,"<sup>2</sup> and, indeed, there is no sentiment more unfavourable to mental and moral health than the sentiment of fear; but there is none which more easily

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Works*, vol. iii. p. 360.

<sup>2</sup> *Wise Wisdom* xvii. 12.



conquers the mind, possessed by an unworthy conception of God. Richard Hooker's balanced judgment seems to distinguish the use and the peril of religious fear: "Fear is a good solicitor to devotion. Howbeit, sith fear in this kind doth grow from an apprehension of Deity endued with irresistible power to hurt, and is of all affections (anger excepted) the unaptest to admit any conference with reason . . . therefore except men know beforehand what manner of service pleaseth God while they are fearful they try all things which fancy offereth. Many there are who never think on God, but when they are in extremity of fear, and then, because what to think or what to do they are uncertain, perplexity not suffering them to be idle, they think and do as it were in a phrensy they know not what."<sup>1</sup> We recall inevitably S. John's repudiation of "fear, as essentially incompatible with the faith of the Incarnation. In that supreme mystery of His self-revelation, God had made known, by the tender and eloquent witness of a perfect human life, that He "is love," and that He "abides in" them that love. Christianity could not build its authority over human souls on the pagan foundation of fear. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us." That creed is the enfranchisement of the human intellect from the disabling terrors of superstition; it is the raising of human character above the demoralizing coercion of a morbid conscience. But that creed of Divine love has not always,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide l.c.* p. 31. c.

nor indeed often, maintained itself in the acceptance of Christians. The old paganism is always coming back under Christian disguises, and always bringing the old consequences of unhappiness, narrowness degradation.

At this moment the thoughtful observer of the Christian society, in all its branches, is faced by a humiliating spectacle of prevailing superstition. He might speak his mind in the very words of S. Paul as he gazed around on the famous monuments of Hellenic religion: "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To an unknown God."

When, with the Divine figure of Jesus Christ fresh in our minds, with His words of benignant grace ringing in our ears, we face the squalid ecclesiastical conflicts of our time, and take note of the things about which Christians evidently feel most strongly, and on which they are most relentless and unyielding, I say the impression made on us is that of bewildering contradiction, of a malignant interchange of parts, of a strange resurrection of paganism in disguise. Can it be that the fear-stricken devotees of our churches who come to us with anxious questions which only superstition could suggest, and which every page of the Gospel prohibits, are really disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The terrors of superstition, however, are less ruinous than the moral obtuseness it breeds in men. Bishop Butler, in his wonderful sermon "Upon the Character of

Balaam," has given us the picture, drawn by a master hand, of this outcome of superstition :

"Balaam had before his eyes the authority of God, absolutely prohibiting him what he, for the sake of a reward, had the strongest inclination to: he was likewise in a state of mind sober enough to consider death and his last end: by these considerations he was restrained, first from going to the king of Moab: and, after he did go, from cursing Israël. But notwithstanding this, there was great wickedness in his heart. He could not forego the rewards of unrighteousness: he therefore first seeks for indulgences; and when these could not be obtained he sins against the whole meaning, end, and design of the prohibition, which no consideration in the world could prevail with him to go against the letter of."

Moral obtuseness is compatible with an ardent zeal for orthodoxy: and close on the heels of superstition follows the Nemesis of scandal. S. Paul declared a fact which every age of Christian history has confirmed by many miserable examples, that the "precepts and doctrines" of superstitious scrupulosity have no real moral worth. "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." Consider how strangely distorted is the moral vision which sees in the use, or the disuse, of some trivial ceremony a matter of cardinal religious importance, and in disobedience to lawful authority, in calumnious abuse of opponents, in spiritual arrogance no sins at all. What has this so-called crisis in the Church been but, on

both sides, the outburst of a superstition which has destroyed all sense of proportion in the minds of religious men?

There is an episode in the record of our Saviour's passion which has always seemed to me the most terrible example of the moral obtuseness engendered by superstition which history contains. We read of the Jews that "they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the palace," which they themselves would not enter "that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover." Can you imagine a grosser exhibition of moral confusion? Religion and morality have wholly parted company in their minds: it never occurs to them that, though they cross not the polluted threshold of the Romans' law-court, they have really passed into the fouler precincts of superstition; that, though they sit at the sacramental feast of passover, they have returned to a worse and more degraded bondage than that of Egypt. That episode of our Master's passion was symbolic of much, prophetic of much. When we honestly face the facts of our religious life, our ready acquiescence in admitted social evils, our facile condonation of class pride, of mercantile fraud, of political dishonesty, our tyrannous insistence on our own "rights," our brutal contempt of the ignorant and simple, our miserable jealousies, our God-dishonouring externalism, can we avoid the full and direct censure of Christ's anathema falling as justly on us as on those proud churchmen who first provoked it? "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy, and faith: but

these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel."

2. There is one result of superstition to which I must ask your particular attention, because it directly concerns the main purpose of my preaching. Excessive externalism, irrational asceticism, the blunting of conscience, intellectual deadness—a false moral perspective—these are not merely so many wounds on individual character, but they, as we have already pointed out, colour and direct individual conduct. They tend always towards ecclesiastical disruption, because by obscuring, and indeed obliterating, the dividing line between the essential and the indifferent, they multiply pseudo-essentials, and manufacture the occasions of historic schism. The question I desire to propound, the answer to which I hold it my duty to press for, is this: How far is superstition, not in the past, but in the present, responsible for our unhappy divisions?—or, to express the same inquiry in other words, When we seriously and responsibly examine the actual points which now part us from those whom we cannot but admit to be fellow-Christians, how many of them can sustain the character of essentials? Are we, or are we not, insisting upon terms of communion which are not authorised by Christ? At least, it must be admitted that if we now require as essential what formerly was not essential, we are acting superstitiously. I notice that in a recently-published volume one of the most learned of English prelates, Bishop Wordsworth of Salisbury, states that "the fundamental institutions of the Church" are the "one Bible everywhere received

in the Church, one creed, one weekly holy day, one baptism, and one Eucharist," and follows the lead of that illustrious prelate, Bishop Lightfoot, in regarding episcopacy as the result of "a general tendency to a monarchical regimen," but "not everywhere set up in exactly the same form or at the same date."<sup>1</sup>

If those were the essential terms of Christian communion in the second century, they must still retain that character: no fresh revelation has been given in the interval authorising additions to the list. The Church acts still by virtue of the old commission. If the first generations of Christians admitted a variety of government, some churches, as those of Rome, Corinth, and Alexandria, remaining for a longer or shorter period presbyterian, some, as those of Asia Minor, becoming even within the apostolic age, episcopal, and yet maintained the fellowship of the Church unbroken, there can be no reason, in the domain of essential Christian principle, why episcopal government should now be insisted on as the necessary basis of Christian unity.

In a later sermon of our course we shall have to consider at length the character and functions of the Christian ministry: at present I only make this brief reference in order to indicate the practical and far-reaching consequences which would follow from the conclusion that the particular form of the ministry belonged to the class of non-essentials.

Once more, I submit that it is grossly superstitious so to hold traditional doctrine as to refuse to accept the evident teachings of Christian experience. If an

<sup>1</sup> *Vide The Ministry of Grace*, vi., vii. Longmans.

unprejudiced and careful study of our own time compels us to admit that non-episcopal ministries are not less spiritually effective than our own, that the sacraments administered by them are equally with ours the channels of those supernatural graces which create the Christian character, that all the tokens of the Holy Ghost's presence and action are as evident in them as in us, by what right can we continue to exclude them from our frank and affectionate fellowship? Will any man, cognizant of the facts, face God and his own conscience with a denial of these things? It would be easy to collect a mass of testimonies, if there were need of proving a conclusion which, I make bold to say, is everywhere admitted outside the coteries of fanaticism. Are we, then, to ignore this imposing demonstration of "the mind of the Spirit"? If Bishop Andrewes said rightly at the beginning of the seventeenth century that he must be blind who did not see churches consisting without the episcopal government (which no man more highly valued or more nobly adorned than himself), what shall be said of those who, with the added authentications of three centuries before their eyes, persist in refusing the name of churches to these numerous, active, and well-organised Christian societies? Are we to refuse the right hand of Christian fellowship to those whom Christ is owning by conspicuous works of power? Are we to go on openly denouncing as schismatics, or quietly acting on the assumption that schismatics they are, these fellow-disciples of our one Master, who—when we consent to consider them—are winning the world for Him? Is that not superstition? "John answered, and said, Master,

we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name: and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against you, is for you." Thus early did the exclusive spirit reveal itself, and thus sternly was it rebuked. Superstition, I said, sprang from a radically false conception of God: it is the creature of pagan ignorance, the haunting phantom of servile terror, the offspring and Nemesis of a morbid conscience. It can only be eradicated by a sound theology: it will only take flight before "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ": "Whosoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

If we would be protected against the creeping paralysis of superstition, if we would gain the rare grace of uniting strong religious convictions with a genuine tolerance and an active charity, if we would be raised above the petty ardours of partisanship, and made to outgrow the shrivelled sympathies of fanaticism, we, like that intolerant apostle, must carry our contentions to the Divine Master, and receive from His lips judgment on our behaviour. We can find Him still, if, indeed, we desire to find Him. On the imperishable canvas of the Gospel His portrait for ever faces us, and, as we read the sacred pages, we stand again in audience of His voice, and behold His glory, "the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." But more than such audience, and such vision, is the fellowship into which He admits us, as we yield ourselves to His spirit, and strive to tread in His footsteps. "In His light we see light." Superstition is the pestilential mist



which exhales from the stagnant marshes of ignorance and error, and wraps the bases of the Mount of God ; but on the heights of that holy hill the sunlight of eternal love for ever shines, and the children of God know even as they have been known. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

## THE JUDGMENT OF CHRIST.

*Preached on Advent Sunday, December 1st, 1901, in Westminster Abbey.*

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NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER, WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, LORD, LORD, DID WE NOT PROPHESY BY THY NAME, AND BY THY NAME CAST OUT DEVILS, AND BY THY NAME DO MANY MIGHTY WORKS? AND THEN WILL I PROFESS UNTO THEM, I NEVER KNEW YOU: DEPART FROM ME, YE THAT WORK INIQUITY.—*S. Matthew* vii. 21-23.

I. THESE words from the Sermon on the Mount assume in the Speaker a character, which He habitually claimed. No candid student of the gospels can doubt that Christ claimed to be, in an unique and absolute sense, the Judge of men. Whether you limit yourself, as the manner of some is, to the synoptic narrative, or whether you include in your inquiry the Gospel according to S. John, this result is unaffected. You are confronted by this stern and far-reaching claim. Christ's language assumes for Him a judgeship, which is both present and future, immediate in the case of every man, exercised in some sense involuntarily by means of the inevitable effect which His presence has on those to

whom it is brought, and distant, ordained to be fulfilled at the Great Assize, when "the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, and shall sit on the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations." When, with the gospels before us, we try to understand the precise meaning of this twofold judgship, we are at first perhaps somewhat perplexed. The men of Christ's generation, and of many subsequent generations, found no difficulty in giving the most prosaic and literal meaning to His words. They imagined quite easily the whole process, method, and aspect of the Last Judgment, for the unseen world was strangely near, and at any moment the visible heavens might part asunder to disclose the inexorable Judge. The clear-cut language of the apostolic writers, so singularly and lastingly impressive in its simplicity, evidently implies a very obvious and literal understanding of Christ's teaching. Thus S. Paul, "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." We remember that the apostle was at that stage in his career persuaded that the second advent of Christ was an imminent event, and that it would be "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God." Probably no passage in literature has more deeply impressed itself on the mind of Christendom than that in which the seer of the Apocalypse describes the "great white throne" of the Judge, and the gathered hosts of the

dead ranged before it, to receive the sentence of eternal destiny. Printed on the memory in childhood, and drawing to itself the fears of conscience, the word-picture of the Apocalypse haunts the imagination of manhood, adds terror to sickness, and darkens the hour of departure. The undertone of life's manifold music is always the sombre chant, "*Lies i:æ, dies illa.*" To men trained as we are, under the influences of a time in which knowledge is extended and faith wanes, the simple literalism of former ages is no longer possible, and the terrors which linger in the imagination seem to lose their foothold in the reason of modern believers. We cannot, therefore, avoid the question, in what sense we are to understand the declarations of Christ? How is He now, and how shall He be hereafter, the Judge of men?

2. Perhaps we may summarise the teaching of the Gospel with respect to Christ's judgship by distinguishing three aspects of His office. He is the "Son of Man," and as such He exhibits the ideal of humanity: He sets the standard of human character: His example gives law to human life. Probably there are few thoughtful students of His recorded words and deeds who will dispute His moral supremacy. Consciously or unconsciously we all accept in Him the rule by which to appraise the moral worth of men. We look, as a matter of course, for qualities in a self-respecting man which—apart from Him—would not be integral to a perfect character. If we cannot conceive of moral excellence apart from purity, mercy, and humility, it is to Jesus Christ that we owe the fact. If we involuntarily

acknowledge something base in scorn, and unworthy in pride: if with us strength necessarily implies service, and privilege is the condition and instrument of sacrifice, we derive our whole standpoint from the Gospel. The accepted measure of goodness among us is, as a matter of fact, correspondence to the model of Christ; and in that sense, as fixing the standard of human worth, He is the Judge of men.

But Jesus Christ claimed to be, in an unique and sovereign sense, the "Son of God." No efforts of honest criticism can cut out of the Gospel that supreme and solemn fact. Embedded in the narratives of S. Matthew and S. Mark, inseparable from them on any sound principle of criticism, are declarations which are not exceeded in range and sublimity by the most characteristic passages of the fourth gospel. Nothing in S. John's record implies a loftier character in Christ than these words from S. Matthew's: "All things have been delivered unto Me by My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father: neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." Those words do not stand alone; they link themselves on most naturally to other utterances preserved in the synoptic gospels, and they leave us no choice in this matter. If we accept, as we are on all grounds compelled to do, the substantial truth of the evangelic account of Jesus Christ, then we are compelled to admit that He habitually claimed to be, in an unique and sovereign sense, the "Son of God," and in that character, to reveal, with plenary knowledge and absolute fidelity, the mind of His Father.

He thus stands before us as the exponent of the Divine judgment on human life. We can learn from Him how God regards us and our action, what is the scale of importance and of merit which God recognizes, what are the principles on which God measures the worth of men. In this sense also, as the Incarnate Righteousness passing sentence on current society, He is truly styled our Judge.

And there is yet another aspect of His claim. However difficult it may be for us to conceive, in any coherent and effective way, a Day of Judgment, yet two things seem to be certain. Religion requires a final court, in which the tangled issues of experience shall be unravelled and decided : the human conscience insists on an ultimate identification and enforcement of the intricately crossing lines of individual responsibility : the general equity of mankind demands the "Day of the Lord," in which righteousness shall at last be triumphantly vindicated, and the insolent tyrannies of sin be finally disallowed and destroyed. All this on the one hand. On the other, there is the fact standing out luminously clear from the Gospel, that Jesus Christ not only endorsed, proclaimed, and interpreted these aspirations, but also definitely asserted that He Himself would be the agent of their satisfaction, that He would have charge of that process of judgment, and declared the range, method, and effect of His judicial action. "The Son of man," He said, "shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then

shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The earliest creed of the Church, which is now thought by the most eminent modern scholars to have taken shape in Rome in the first decades of the second century, contains the declaration of Christ's judgeship, and thereby continues the tradition of the apostles, who, in their extant writings, make constant reference to the same truth. The latest creeds remain in this respect unaltered. Christianity is bound to the belief that in some way, unimaginable perhaps to us, the historic Jesus will bring to judgment all the human race, and pass the sentence of absolute equity on every individual human career.

3. From all this the consequence evidently follows that for us, who are to be judged by the standard of Christ's example, on the principles of Divine judgment which Christ has declared, by Christ Himself as Judge in the day of His final triumph, the utmost importance attaches to our just appreciation of His witness in the Gospel. Within the narrow limits of a single sermon it would, of course, be vain to attempt any detailed or complete estimate of that witness; but it is essential for the purpose of my preaching that I should fasten your attention on the outstanding characteristics of Christ's judgment. These lie on the surface of the Gospel. Christ declared that the basis of His action as Judge would be moral quality. He takes account of men's words and deeds only in so far as they are the witnesses of character. The "idle words," that is, corrupt and corrupting words, which men speak must be brought into

reckoning in the day of judgment, because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and such words reveal the "evil treasure" of a debased heart. Conversation, indeed, is the best evidence possible to prove the normal course of a man's thoughts, and the habitual direction of his interest. Therefore Christ affirms that our words, by which we must surely understand the sum of our ordinary talk, will have decisive weight in determining our moral worth. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Nothing, He taught, would be accepted in lieu of moral excellence. He swept away with decision the whole venerable and powerful tradition of external religion. He "made," as S. Mark says, "all meats clean" by His doctrine of pollution. Not ceremonial cleanness, but purity of heart, would qualify men for the approach to God. He declared the absolute necessity of forgiving others if we would be forgiven at God's hand, and in order to establish that high and arduous truth in Christian minds, He enshrined it in the form of prayer, which He ordained to be in perpetual use, and to serve as the standard of all prayer. Zeal and success, He said, counted for nothing in His eyes, if they were compatible with unrighteousness: He would say to those who, in the final day of reckoning, paraded their activity and great religious achievements in His Name, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." The spiritual value of all religious acts was by Him made to depend on the motive which prompted and the sacrifice which enabled them. The farthing of the poor widow outweighed in His balances the large



donations of the wealthy, because while that farthing was her whole property, their lavish gifts came from their superfluity of wealth. In like manner, He blessed the offering of "an alabaster cruse of ointment of spikenard, very costly," because it witnessed to the devotion of a courageous faith. He allowed no independent efficacy in religious privilege, for in His view privilege was inseparable from responsibility, and moral failure in the privileged was doubly blameworthy. "That servant, which knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes: but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes: and to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more." The time-honoured sophistries weighed nothing with Him against the requirements of essential piety. He refused to consider the undoubted convenience of the temple-traffic, nor yet the fact that it was authorised and regulated by the established ecclesiastical authority. He seized, held up to public identification, and condemned the essential outrage on all that Zion stood for in the earth, the implied contradiction of the primary meaning of the temple, which that convenient and lucrative traffic involved. "He taught and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers." His severe attitude towards the public immoralities of Jewish society was based on, and required by, His stern doctrine of individual morality. He was explicit on the absolute necessity of breaking

with sin at all cost, and He plainly indicated that the cost might be great. There is a remarkable metaphor which is placed by S. Matthew in connection with sins of unchastity, and by S. Mark in connection with causing Christ's little ones to stumble, and which we may infer was not infrequently on His lips; no words could more impressively describe the exceeding anguish which may be involved in breaking off such sins. "If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell." His estimate of moral fault did not coincide with the current judgment of His time. His scale of relative guilt received no sanction from the public opinion of His nation. He was extremely severe against respectable sins, by which I mean sins that entail no scandal and breed no shame, which are consistent with conventional self-respect, and are, as a matter of fact, common among religious people. Pride, covetousness, ostentation in religious observances, arrogance towards the poor, hypocrisy, and the exclusive temper—these He sternly denounced. On two occasions He was stirred to anger: on the one, the Pharisees exhibited the shameless bigotry which will twist into the service of hatred even the most apparent goodness: on the other, the apostles, filled with official importance, drove the children from His side. His whole conception of religion ran counter to the established teaching of the official class, for He summarised religion as consisting in love of God, and love of one's neighbour: and, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, He taught a conception of neighbourly duty,

which made it embrace all the misery which men have it in their power to relieve. Nothing could be more explicit than His condemnation of every kind of professional self-importance among His disciples. "Be not ye called rabbi: for one is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." In the general judgment He declared that everything would depend on the serviceableness of men's lives. And that the exceeding importance of this serviceableness might never slip out of our minds, He appointed all the victims of want and woe to be His delegates, commissioning the manifold wretchedness of the world to seek the help of His Church in His Name, and He added the assurance that the treatment which that appeal received at our hands would be the final test of discipleship: "The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me." Such in broad, outstanding features was the Judgment of Christ.

4. And such, I submit, ought to be the judgment of the Church, which Christ founded and commissioned. I do not mean, of course, that the literal circumstances of Christ's life on earth are, as far as possible, to be reproduced in the lives of His true servants. That pathetic dream of an *Imitatio Christi*, which shall in that way sustain before men the eloquent tradition of One Who had not where to lay His Head, though He was Lord of all, belongs, for all its beauty and nobility, to the

materializing thought of religious childhood. It is dramatically effective, but spiritually barren. The Church, with S. Paul, must "know no man after the flesh," and even though, in the imperishable Gospel, it also knows Christ after the flesh, yet now it must know Him so no more. The whole tendency of Christ's ministry is contradicted by the notion that the external conditions of His life are to constitute a model for Christian imitation. But in a deeper sense, the *Imitatio Christi* is the law of Christianity. The Church exists to perpetuate and apply in practice the principles which in His life He revealed and authorised. If it be the case that the accepted and prevailing principles of ecclesiastical life do not only not coincide with those which governed Him, but even contradict them, then can it be disputed that we are confronted by a situation the most melancholy and perilous in the world? When we pass from the gospels to the epistles we are, I think, conscious of an indefinable but apparent decline; there is a perceptible shadow on the scene, though it is radiant still.

"But yet I know, where'er I go,

• That there hath passed away a glory from the earth."

Still in the main, through ominous conflict of rival teachers, and contending parties, and invading superstitions, the apostolic literature holds loyally to the judgment of Christ. The moral aspect of religion is still supreme; the ceremonial and official elements are kept subordinate within the Church. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but

righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The obligations of discipleship are still summarized, as in the Gospel, in the terms of 'service' and 'fraternity': "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children: and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us." "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? The help of man is still the Christian notion of giving glory to God, and the essence of discipleship is still a personal relation to the Crucified. We pass from the New Testament to the sub-apostolic writers, and we are in a new world. The judgment of Christ is apparently fading from the mind of the Church. Read the letters of S. Ignatius, and marvel at the rapidity of the transition from Christ's condemnation of official importance to an exaltation of the bishop's authority so extravagant that, in Bishop Lightfoot's opinion, the language, if taken literally, would invest the episcopal office with a "crushing despotism."<sup>1</sup>

Read the epistle attributed to Barnabas, and wonder at the contrast between its exegetic puerilities and the strong wisdom of the apostles. And this deterioration has continued until the Christian Church has seemed to wholly repudiate the judgment of Christ, and to renew before the astonished world the very features of that ecclesiastical system which He denounced.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide The Christian Ministry*, p. 237. Philippians.

It is literally true that the severest satire on the Church of Christ ever penned in the whole course of its long history is the record of its Founder's life. No hierarchy has been so proud as the Christian; no superstition more abject; no zeal more ruthless; no casuistry more depraved; and yet never a week, probably never a day, has passed since the Church was on the earth without the accusing record of the Master being proclaimed abroad in its assemblies. It is the most amazing, the most afflicting paradox in history.

5. Turn from the past to the present, and consider in the light of the judgment of Christ the current practice of Christianity. I suppose there never was a time when Christian men boasted so boldly of their religious success. Statistics of progress are the fashion of the hour, and the appeal for the support of spiritual work is drawn on the familiar lines of commercial advertisement, and with good reason. Commercialism has invaded the sanctuary. The churches—here at home in our parishes, abroad among the confused and scandalized heathen—are competing one against another in the spirit and attitude of business rivals, and their methods are borrowed, not from the Gospel, but from the exchange. Make no mistake. This competition of the churches, in which some insanely exult, is dishonouring the honourable name by which they all are called, is inflicting infinite damage on Christian character, and going far to destroy the moral worth of Christian effort. I protest to you that I never read the official year books of the churches, and all the kindred literature which they represent—that ever-growing public library of self-advertisement and self-admiration—

without hearing in my soul that stern, sad voice of Jesus Christ, certifying as from the very Judgment Throne, failure and rejection where we proclaim success, and assume acceptance: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy Name, and by Thy Name cast out devils, and by Thy Name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

The thought of Christ's judgment ought to breed in us a deep discontent with our present state; it ought to move us to anxious self-examination, to make us ready, nay, eager to consider together, as it were in the very presence of the Judge, the actual causes of our guilty rivalries. I am convinced that, if but those gracious dispositions filled our minds, we should, indeed, have gone a great way to recover fraternity. O brethren, when we really face the grave and growing mischiefs of our unhappy and unnecessary divisions, here at home, where they paralyze our work for God, there abroad, where they neutralize our zeal and contradict our message, can we doubt that no price short of the truth itself could be too great, no sacrifice short of the very principles of the Gospel could be too severe, in order that we might at last remove this stumbling-block from our way, and recover fraternity with one another? On Advent Sunday, assuredly, I may fitly address such an appeal to you, for Advent Sunday places us in the very

presence of the Judge. S. Paul was right when he linked together Christ's judgment and the recovery of fraternity, and with his moving appeal I may well sum up the lesson of my preaching: "But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling."



## THE BIBLE.

*Preached on the 2nd Sunday in Advent, December 8th, 1901, in  
Westminster Abbey.*

YE SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, BECAUSE YE THINK THAT IN THEM YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE: AND THESE ARE THEY WHICH BEAR WITNESS OF ME: AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MAY HAVE LIFE.—*S. John v. 39, 40.*

THE subject which must claim our attention this afternoon is one of no ordinary importance, and of no ordinary interest. The Bible represents one of the unities of Christendom. All Christians in all ages agree in counting the holy Scriptures as a precious part of the Divine provision for men's spiritual wants.

It is no doubt the case that the Roman Church, in recognizing "tradition" as equally authoritative with the written word, has gone far to neutralize its professed adhesion to the Christian attitude of reverence for the Bible, yet in theory that church unites with the rest of the Christian society in doing homage to the sacred writings, and the reconciling influence of that theoretic agreement was made plain by the cordial reception given in ultra-Protestant circles to the present Pontiff's encyclical on "The Study of Holy Scripture," issued eight years ago. The Anglican bishops assembled at Lambeth in 1888 proposed as the first article of possible

agreement with the Protestant churches, the acceptance of "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as 'containing all things necessary to salvation,' and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith." On that article at least, little difficulty need be apprehended, for the non-episcopal churches have never failed to manifest an ardent devotion to the Bible. Chillingworth's famous dictum, "The Bible is the religion of Protestants," is obviously open to criticism, but it does express in a striking way the paramount importance which has commonly been attached to the Scriptures among Protestant Christians. When, driven by the force of the great reaction against the whole system of mediæval Christianity, men cast about for some substitute which should take the place of the ecclesiastical authority which they had broken up, and the sacramental system which for the time they had lost, they found, or thought they found, all they needed in the Bible. And, truly, it is marvellous how potent a moral influence the sacred volume has exercised, and does still exercise, upon those who devoutly study it.

"In this peculiarly"—said Alexander Knox—"is the wisdom and goodness of God manifested, that the holy Scripture is so formed, as that whosoever studies, will be almost necessarily drawn to love it . . . The great attraction lies in this, that throughout the Scripture there is a divine magnetism fitted, by the Author of all things, to all the deepest sensibilities of the human heart. There is in every part of it, where instruction is intended, a certain divine influence which induces serious thought, enkindles holy desire, inspires good resolutions. It

places everywhere before us, that which our hearts tell us is 'the one thing needful'; and while it instructs us in principles, it draws by examples. But its grand energy is the view it gives us of a Redeemer. It is in Him we are to find the central light, where all the rays converge."<sup>1</sup> The philosopher Coleridge, in those wonderful *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, which were his latest and not least precious gift to the world, writes with no less enthusiasm and a more stately eloquence:—

"In every generation, and wherever the light of Revelation has shone, men of all ranks, conditions, and states, of mind have found in this volume a correspondent for every movement towards the Better felt in their own hearts. "The needy soul has found supply, the feeble a help, the sorrowful a comfort; yea, be the reciprocity the least that can consist with moral life, there is an answering grace ready to enter. The Bible has been found a spiritual world—spiritual, and yet 'at the same time outward and common to all. You in one place, I in another, all men somewhere or at sometime, meet with an assurance that the hopes and fears, the thoughts and yearnings that proceed from, or tend to, a right spirit in us, are not dreams or fleeting singularities, no voices heard in sleep, or spectres which the eye suffers but not perceives. As if on some dark night a pilgrim, suddenly beholding a bright star moving before him, should stop in fear and perplexity. But lo! traveller after traveller passes by him, and each, being questioned whither he is going, makes answer, 'I am following yon guiding star!' The pilgrim quickens his

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Remains*, iii. p. 338.

own steps, and presses onward in confidence. More confident still will he be, if by the wayside he should find, here and there, ancient monuments, each with its votive lamp, and on each the name of some former pilgrim, and a record that there he had first seen or begun to follow the benignant star! No otherwise is it with the varied contents of the sacred volume."<sup>1</sup>

• It would be an easy task to multiply such testimonies to the unique moral influence of the Bible, but you will rather expect me to face the fact that testimonies of another kind are accumulating. We cannot deny or belittle the change that is passing over men's attitude toward that sacred volume, which Christians have in the past regarded with Cranmer as "the most precious jewel and most holy relic that remaineth upon earth."<sup>2</sup> Alexander Knox died in 1831, and Coleridge in 1834; they had passed away before the conflict between the Bible and science, which had seemed to slumber since the seventeenth century, again broke out. In the years 1830 to 1833 Lyell's *Principles of Geology* issued from the press, and destroyed the credibility of the time-honoured belief that the creation was a definite event in history, bearing an ascertainable date. In 1859 Darwin published the *Origin of Species*, a challenge to the Mosaic account of the process of creation. Three years later Colenso put forth his bold and far-reaching examination of the Pentateuch. He was the herald of a long series of books on biblical criticism, mostly translations

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, p. 69. London: 1840.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Works*, vol. ii. p. 112.

from German scholars, but including also original English work, which have shaken confidence in the Bible, and permanently altered our modes of regarding it. At least with respect to four points of cardinal importance, the Christian of the twentieth century will take a new view of the sacred volume. It will be worth our while very briefly to notice these points.

1. The traditional doctrine of Christianity assures us that the Scriptures are inspired documents, and, though the Church has never authoritatively decided the nature and limits of their inspiration, yet the current belief, expressed in Christian literature and implied in the authoritative treatment of the sacred text, does undoubtedly extend inspiration to all parts of the canonical writings alike, and exempt them on that ground from the normal exercise of the critical faculty. The words of S. Paul to S. Timothy have been read, wrongly I think, but not unnaturally, as applying to all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and by necessary implication to those of the New. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness"; and all scripture having been thus lifted on to one level, has been treated as of equal authority. Biblical criticism disallows this traditional doctrine. It insists on applying to the sacred writings without reserve the same principles of literary and historical judgment as those which govern the study of all other literature. It refuses to treat the Bible as one volume, and lays emphasis on the multifariousness of its contents. This, indeed, is no new doctrine. Edmund Burke, in his speech on the Acts of

Uniformity in the House of Commons in 1772, had described the Bible in terms which hardly need alteration in order to match the requirements of the present time. "The Bible," he said, "is a vast collection of different treatises; a man who holds the divine authority of one may consider the other as merely human." And again: "The Scripture is a most venerable, but most multifarious, collection of the records of the Divine economy—a collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books, by different authors, at different ages, for different ends and purposes."<sup>1</sup>

The inspiration of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and that of the Book of Esther manifestly is not the same in quality. The fifty-first psalm and those terrible imprecatory psalms, which jar so harshly on Christian ears, and surely ought to have no place in Christian worship, cannot be reasonably classed together. We perceive that the spiritual worth of the sixty-six books of the Bible varies almost infinitely. We are led to inquire on what basis they have been united in one volume, and by what authority their sacred character is vouched for. This is the important and difficult question of the canonicity of Scripture.

2. The traditional doctrine of Christianity assumes that the books of the Bible have been deliberately adjudged to be canonical by a competent external authority—the Jewish Church in the case of the Old Testament, and the Christian Church in the case of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Works*, vol. vii. p. 19. 1899.

New. The sixth article of the Church of England says shortly: "In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." How futile, for all practical purposes, this article is may be sufficiently shown by the admitted facts that the modern canon of the New Testament was not definitely fixed until the fourth century or later, and that of the books now universally accepted as canonical some were for the most part of that long period seriously doubted of in certain parts of the ancient Church. The history of the canon of Scripture has been made the subject of careful research in recent times, and the broad results are sufficiently clear. English Churchmen may reflect with pride that in this department of sacred study an honourable place is held by English scholars. The late Bishop Westcott's book *On the Canon of the New Testament*, Bishop Herbert Ryle's book *On the Canon of the Old Testament*, Dr. Sanday's Bampton Lectures on *Inspiration*, and the articles in the recently-published biblical dictionaries by Dr. Stanton, Dr. Woods, and my distinguished colleague, Dr. Armitage Robinson, will enable any intelligent and thoughtful student to appreciate the change which has passed over Christian thought with respect to the process and effect of canonicity. We see that it is scarcely true to say that external authority has played a decisive part, for both the Jewish and the Christian Churches in their official decisions appear to have followed and endorsed established usage. "The official conclusion" of "the gradual formation" of the

Old Testament canon was reached about the first century of our era. Practically, we may be sure, its bounds had "long before been decided by popular use."<sup>1</sup> The limits of the New Testament canon were not finally fixed until the fourth century or later; and the influence which established them was less official than personal. "The canon of the 'New Testament,' which was supported by the learning of Jerome and the independent judgment of Augustine, soon gained universal acceptance wherever Latin was spoken. . . . From this time," says Bishop Westcott, "(i.e., the beginning of the fifth century), the canon of the New Testament in the West was no longer a problem but a tradition. If old doubts were mentioned, it was rather as a display of erudition than as an effort of criticism."<sup>2</sup> In the case of both Testaments the ecclesiastical decisions did but ratify the popular practice, which itself reflected the result of a gradual and unconscious process of "natural selection."

When we go on to inquire what, in the first instance, were the dominant considerations which commended documents to public acceptance, the answer is not altogether unambiguous. In the case of the Old Testament, writings may have been admitted into the canon or rejected from it as they presented, or failed to present, the character of prophecy; in the New Testament, probably the governing consideration was apostolic authorship, either direct, as in the case of the Pauline epistles, or indirect, as in the case of S. Luke's

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Ryle, *l.c.* p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Westcott, *l.c.* p. 455.



writings. If, however, these were the decisive considerations, it is sufficiently plain that no adequate application of them was made either in the practice or in the official decisions of the respective churches. Criticism hardly authenticates the theory which, presumably, determined canonicity. The prophetic character of the Old Testament writings is scarcely assured by their place in the canon; nor is apostolic authorship a sufficient explanation of canonicity in the case of the Christian documents. Nevertheless the notion of prophecy as the distinctively inspired element in the one case, and that of apostolic witness in the other, are suggestive and, within limits, satisfying contributions to a theory of inspiration, which shall justify the traditional Christian veneration for the Scriptures without doing violence to fact or reason. Canonicity, moreover, as understood in the past, assumes the equal authority of all parts of Scripture; and it is notorious that this assumption has governed the general practice of theologians. It inspires the question addressed to the candidate for deacon's orders by the bishop—a question which is certainly felt as a hindrance to ordination by many thoughtful men, and which I honestly think is indefensible: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?" and it underlies the language of the Seventh Article, which affirms that "the Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ," and that "they are not to be heard which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory

promises." We can see that if this assumption of the equal authority of all parts of the Bible be disallowed, a great change will follow in the sphere of interpretation.

3. It will no longer be legitimate to accumulate proofs of doctrine from every part of the Bible, and construct arguments by prodigies of textual dovetailing out of the most incongruous materials. Criticism prohibits the indiscriminate use of Scripture, and condemns all forms of arbitrary interpretation.\* Of these the most ancient, popular, and influential is allegorism, which can even claim the sanction of apostolic usage. Allegorism has undoubtedly been in the past the favourite method of interpretation, and even in the present it obtains a wide acceptance. A modern writer has justly observed "that the countless books written to elaborate the principles of allegorism contain a mass of futility such as it would be difficult to match in any other class of literature."<sup>1</sup>

Biblical criticism, moreover, largely provides a substitute for allegorism as an expedient devised by thoughtful men in order to reconcile the moral crudities of the Old Testament with the higher morality of the Gospel. The refinements of the Alexandrine fathers, carrying on the exegetic tradition of Philo, are not needed by the modern student, who is at no loss for a natural explanation of the incidents and doctrines which tortured the minds of pious men in earlier times.\* The method devised in the interest of culture was perpetuated by the piety of ignorance. As a method of interpretation allegorism is indefensible, but as a means of edification

<sup>1</sup> Vide Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 272.

it will probably always justify itself at the bar of the Christian conscience. It would be difficult to find a better description of the popular treatment of the Scriptures even at the present time than this, which I borrow from an epistle of S. Gregory written thirteen centuries ago: "For as from one lump of gold, some fashion brooches, some rings, some bracelets for purposes of ornament, so from one science of Holy Scripture expositors by means of countless interpretations devise, as it were, divers jewels, which all serve to beautify the heavenly bride."<sup>1</sup> Nor could the theory of popular allegorism be better stated than in this sentence from the same epistle, that "in the understanding of Holy Scripture nothing ought to be rejected which is not repugnant to a sound faith." That is to say, that within orthodox limits pious fancy may run riot in the sphere of Scriptural exegesis.

It may not be denied that by means of this licence of interpretation the Scriptures may be made a powerful moral influence in the general life: they draw to themselves the affections of ardent souls: they are invested with the spiritual beauty of devout imagination: they gather about them a wealth of tender and precious associations. Every student obtains from them the guidance he seeks, for they return to him his own suggestions: in the hands of the allegorist they are patient of every pious interpretation. This is much, but there is another side to the question. If the immediate gains are great, the inherent mischiefs are greater. The Scriptures which are distorted in one direction, may be

<sup>1</sup> *Vide S. Greg. Epist.* vol. iii. No. 62.

distorted in the other. Allegorism is an instrument which can be used by the fanatical and the unscrupulous as well as by the holy and enthusiastic. Where there are no recognized principles of interpretation, the safeguards of reason and religion are lacking, and the worst calamities are possible. Not the least service which biblical criticism has rendered to religion is the prohibition of arbitrary, that is, ultimately, of dishonest exegesis.

4. From all this it follows that the uses to which the Bible is put by modern Christians are no longer what they were. And here it is that our present argument enters into the main purpose of our preaching. These far-reaching and, at first sight, alarming changes worked by criticism in our whole view and treatment of the Scriptures will, I believe, be found to be ministerial to the blessed consequence of religious peace: for the old springs of exasperation and conflict are cut off. Nobody any more dreams of finding in the Scriptures the statutes by which a Christian commonwealth ought to be governed; and only a rapidly diminishing number cling to the patently indefensible view that in the Scriptures may be found either an adequate, formal statement of Christian belief, or a detailed and obligatory scheme of ecclesiastical order. We are all agreed now that there is no validity in Christian appeals to the rudimentary and defective morals of the Old Testament, in order to justify or excuse departures from the morality of Christ. We all endorse the doctrine of Richard Hooker as to the conditions under which the authority of Scripture is to be recognized. The Divine wisdom,

he says, has other modes of teaching, and we must be equally attentive to all: "As her ways are of sundry kinds, so her manner of teaching is not merely one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred books of Scripture; some things by the glorious works of nature; with some things she inspireth them from above by spiritual influence; in some things she leadeth and traineth them only by worldly experience and practice. We may not so in any one special kind admire her, that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her ways be according unto their place and degree adored."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Bible ceases at length to be a source of disunion, and becomes the basis of unity. The gibe of the great polemical satirist of the Restoration is losing its force:

"As long as words a different sense will bear,  
And each may be his own interpreter,  
Our airy faith will no foundation find;  
The word's a weathercock for every wind."<sup>2</sup>

For now at length we are coming to see that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Christ's words to the Pharisees unveil to us both the cause of past blunders and the method of future advance: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me: and ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life." The religious claim of that mingled literature, which is bound within the covers of the Bible, lies in the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Eccl. Pol.*, bk. ii. ch. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Dryden, *Hind and Panther*, part<sup>o</sup> 1, 462-466.

fact that it has relation, more or less direct, with the central fact of history—the Incarnation of God in the Son of Mary. From the vantage-ground of that supreme fact we regard the long historic process of which it is the flower and climax, and we find ourselves confronted by the most amazing national record of which time preserves the knowledge. The Jewish people, from whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, is certified, by signs which none can mistake, to be the sacred nation, the priest of the peoples: and the inner meaning of its strange, long-drawn-out tragedy of life is uncovered in its literature; and that literature, shaped by the normal forces, conforming to the conventional types, subject to temporal conditions, in no respect exempt from the legitimate exercise of the critical faculty, but retaining only this inalienable character that it is the literature of the consecrated race, and offering that as its title to religious reverence—that literature is the Old Testament. It is the record of progressive revelation; it is the story of a process of development, which found its climax, and, therefore, finds its interpretation, in Christ. Of the New Testament there is no need to speak. Its claims to our acceptance lies in the evident fact that it is the instrument of all the certain knowledge we possess of the historic Jesus. It has been the will of God to redeem mankind in and by an historic process: we can but bend in homage before the impenetrable mystery. “God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son.”

Too often in the past, the Bible, like the Church, has been made an idol, and received the homage of Christian worship, and then, both the one and the other, have become the victims of Christian fanaticism and the occasions of schism. The pathetic spectacle of good men deluded by their own mistaken zeal, and led astray by that which was assigned to be their guide to truth, has been again and again presented to view. Christ's contrast has been as familiar among Christians as among Jews. On the one hand, the Divine purpose in the Scriptures, "These are they which testify of Me." On the other hand, the defeat of that purpose in the students of the Scriptures, "Ye will not come to Me that ye may have life."

But now—thanks be to God!—there are signs of hope and voices of encouragement. From Bible and from Church men are turning to Him, the living and Eternal Christ, to whom Bible and Church bear witness, apart from whom Bible and Church have no sanctity or value, in Whom, and in Whom alone, there is life.

## APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

*Preached on the 3rd Sunday in Advent, December 15th, 1901,  
in Westminster Abbey.*

LET A MAN SO ACCOUNT OF US, AS OF MINISTERS OF CHRIST, AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD.—I *Corinthians* iv. 1.

ON the Third Sunday in Advent the familiar order of the church service directs our thoughts to the subject of the Christian ministry, and I have chosen for that reason as the theme of my preaching to-day a theory about the Christian ministry, which has maintained its ground from the third century until this present time, which has influenced most powerfully the course of Christian history, and which now presents one of the most formidable obstacles to that restoration of external fellowship among the disciples of Christ which the most precious interests of mankind manifestly and urgently demand. It will be my task to-day to inquire into the origin, meaning, and perpetual truth of the doctrine of apostolic succession, and in the process of my preaching I shall have opportunity to distinguish, identify, and repudiate the perversion of that doctrine which has commonly prevailed, and does still in many quarters hold its ground. Apostolic succession, in the general usage of the phrase, stands for the theory of the origin



of the episcopal ministry which was developed in the conflicts with the heretics of the second and third centuries; which was formulated by the organizing genius of S. Cyprian, and commended to the acceptance of the Church by his lofty character and masterful personality, and which was finally established in Christian thought and practice by the still greater authority of S. Augustine. The theory is sufficiently familiar, and simple. The modern bishop is held to derive his authority through a line of regularly ordained bishops reaching back in an unbroken chain to the apostles themselves. This succession is held to be the sole security we have that our clergy now possess a Divine commission, and the authority to exercise a valid ministry. Thus the validity of the sacraments comes to depend on the apostolic succession of the bishops, and a fatal insecurity is attached to all non-episcopal ministrations. It is obvious that the whole case of a valid Christian ministry is made to turn on the fact whether or not the apostles instituted an episcopal government as a perpetual institution upon which the very life of the Church depended. "It rests," to use Dr. Liddon's words, "upon the broad fact that in the Church of the apostles there was an order of men, such as were Timothy and Titus, who notoriously discharged the apostolic functions of ordination and chief government in particular portions of the Church, and who had been solemnly entrusted with these functions by apostolic hands."<sup>1</sup>

The two crucial facts, then, are—first, the existence of

<sup>1</sup> *A Father in Christ*, 2nd ed. p. xix.

an order of apostolic deputies; and, next, the fact of their ordination to their office by the laying on of apostolic hands. When we ask for the evidence on which these facts are supported, and which by inexorable consequence have to sustain the weight of a theory which prohibits the recognition and invalidates the communion of the vast majority of the reformed churches, we are offered the testimony of the pastoral epistles. Dr. Liddon was under no delusions on this point. "In our own days," he said, in a memorable sermon, "the question of episcopacy is increasingly seen to be bound up with that of the apostolic origin and authority of the pastoral epistles."<sup>1</sup>

Now, whatever view we may take about the pastoral epistles, and I for one am prepared, though with great hesitation, to accept them as genuine writings of S. Paul, yet the most superficial student of modern theology knows that those documents are marked by "features which legitimately provoke suspicion," that in point of fact they are heavily suspected by many competent scholars, by some, as for example Weizsäcker, rejected altogether, by others, as Harnack, regarded as compilations based on genuine Pauline letters. I submit to you that, even if the pastoral epistles, justly considered, will support the theory in question, yet they themselves are an extremely unsatisfactory foundation for so tremendous an ecclesiastical claim. But do the pastoral epistles, assumed to be genuine, really justify the necessity of episcopal ordination? Are either of Dr. Liddon's inferences sound? Did an "order" of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide l.c.*, p. 14.

apostolic delegates exist in the apostolic age, or were S. Timothy and S. Titus charged with an occasional and personal mission? Is it certain that the laying on of apostolic hands was, then, the invariable and indispensable mode of appointing men to the presbyterate?

The first question suggests an anachronism, and the last does not admit of a positive answer. The two great Cambridge scholars whose names are "household words" among all serious theological students, Bishop Lightfoot and Dr. Hort, disallow Dr. Liddon's interpretations. Dr. Hort, in that luminous and suggestive book, *The Christian Ecclesia*, examines, with characteristic care, the evidence of the pastoral epistles as to the organisation of the Church, and deliberately rejects the notion that the gift of God which was in Timothy through the laying on of S. Paul's hands is to be understood of the grace of ordination. "The context," he says, "excludes the thought of a *χάρισμα* meant specially for Ephesian administration or teaching, to which there is no allusion whatever."<sup>1</sup> The reference rather is to S. Timothy's divinely-certified designation to be S. Paul's partner in missionary work, in place of S. Barnabas. And on the other point Dr. Hort is equally explicit: "Neither here then (*i.e.*, in the pastoral epistles), nor elsewhere in the New Testament, have we any information about the manner in which elders were consecrated or ordained (the exact word matters little), to their office."<sup>2</sup> No man is infallible: Dr. Hort may be mistaken, but so may

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Christian Ecclesia*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide l.c.* p. 215.

Dr. Liddon ; and when, as in this case, they differ, a prudent man will be chary of basing anything of importance on the point of difference. This is the conclusion to which I would lead you. The basis in Scripture for the necessity of episcopal ordination is insufficient. At most the question is left open. We must make appeal to the sub-apostolic literature

Here we are on well-trodden ground, over which it would serve no good purpose for me to attempt to lead you in the brief time at my disposal. It must suffice for me to refer you to such masterly summaries of the evidence as Bishop Lightfoot's *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*, originally published in 1868 as an appendix to the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, and now, I rejoice to see, republished as an independent work ; and the Bishop of Salisbury's new book, *The Ministry of Grace*, which takes account of such fresh materials as have been brought together during the interval, and deals with a much-debated subject in a very fresh and suggestive way. If you will allow me to add a word of advice to those of you who desire to appreciate these reviews of the patristic evidence, I would recommend you to buy a small volume put together by Professor Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Writers illustrative of Church History to the Time of Constantine*. The principal passages from the fathers of that period, which bear on our present subject, are here conveniently collected and arranged and printed both in the original Greek and Latin, and in an excellent English translation. Some of you, I doubt not, will be familiar with larger books, but I think

I may safely assume of the majority of this great assembly that, however keenly interested they may, and, indeed as intelligent Christians must be, in the questions at issue, yet their leisure is little, and their ordinary reading lies in other directions. Believe me, the decisive facts are comparatively few, and they are extremely well-known; the average intelligence of any man, sufficiently educated to appreciate reasoning and sufficiently industrious to acquire knowledge, is not unequal to the task of forming a reasonable judgment on the essential question. Remember that the traditional and current doctrine of apostolic succession is no merely academic theory, which plain men may with reason leave to the learned labours of professional scholars, and ought in modesty to do so. That doctrine enters into the life of nearly every English household, for where is there a family into which our religious differences have not entered, so that one or another member of it is not outside the communion of the Episcopal Church? And if Dr. Liddon be as true as he is logical when he tells us plainly that "the non-episcopal communities lack participation in those privileges which depend upon a ministry duly authorized by Christ our Lord, and in particular, the precious sacrament of His Body and Blood," then it is matter not merely of evident and urgent religious duty, but of manifest Christian charity, to leave no effort unexerted to bring our relatives and friends out of a spiritually fatal error.

And there is yet another reason why every Christian man, as such, should face and decide for himself

whether or not this doctrine of the necessity of episcopal consecration be true. In the name of that "adequate seriousness" for which Dr. Liddon so justly contended, I submit that no man ought lightly to bind upon Christianity the burden of a doctrine, which afflicts men's hearts and perplexes their consciences, which seems to be strangely alien to the spirit of the Gospel, and which certainly involves practical consequences of a character which no Christian can contemplate without misgiving. Most requisite at all times is it for us to remember Bishop Butler's impressive warning, "how great presumption it is to make light of any institutions of divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from Him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them, an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense."<sup>1</sup> But surely we are guilty of no less presumption when we attribute to God what is not His, wrapping the creatures of our own credulity or ignorance, or even interest, with the awful insignia of His authority. Surely there was reverence not less than reason in the passionate protest of the Quaker apologist: "I beseech you Protestants, by the mercies of God and love of Jesus Christ, ratified to you in His most precious Blood, flee Rome at home: look to the enemies of your own house! Have a care of this presumption; carry it not too high: lay not stress where God has laid none, neither use His royal stamp to authorize your apprehensions in the name of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Analogy*, part 2, ch. i. en.

His institutions.”<sup>1</sup> I charge you, brethren, not to accept unexamined and unjudged this doctrine of apostolic succession, which rends our Christendom asunder. S. Clement, the earliest of the apostolic fathers, says that “our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop’s office.”<sup>2</sup> Reading his words by the light of the Christian centuries, we almost inevitably read into them a deeper and more sinister sense than he had in mind. The name, that is, the dignity of the bishop, not in Clement’s sense, for his “bishop” was, as in the usage of the New Testament, still only a presbyter, but in the sense of the later Church, has been and remains a continual spring of strife. If we could at length renounce that obstinate fiction of Divine right attaching to one or another form of ecclesiastical organisation, we should at least have secured the external condition of Christian reunion; so long as that barrier remains, fraternity is a futile hope.

But it is time for me to turn to the more pleasing and, I would fain believe, more edifying aspect of my subject. Apostolic succession, as the title-deeds of an exclusive hierarchy, is a fiction, but as a doctrine of the Christian ministry, as such, it is profoundly true. And here we may distinguish three characteristics of the ministry, which attach to it by virtue of the fact that it perpetuates within the Christian society the ministry of the apostles. 1. We are warned away from low views of the ministerial vocation. We are reminded that the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Penn, *Works*, vol. i. p. 750. London, 1726.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Ep. 44.

Christian ministry is no after-thought, no creature of policy, no temporary feature of the historic society, but in and through all varieties of organisation, a divinely ordained, divinely commissioned, perpetually obligatory means of grace. It is no fiction, but blessed and momentous verity, that the Christian ministry stands in the succession of those apostles to whom Christ's ordaining word was spoken: "As the Father sent Me, even so send I you." The high teaching of S. Paul, so sublime and so searching, remains unalterably true of those who, in later ages, have been called to be "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." It is by no abuse of language, by no mere figure of speech, consecrated by long usage, but empty of living force, that we, also, face our fellows with the great declaration: "We are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were intreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." The divine commission, certified to every genuine minister of Christ by the audible though voiceless summons of the Holy Ghost, is certified to the Church, which he must serve in spiritual things, and to the rest of men, whom he must call to God, by the public official ordination which he receives. The divine vocation to the ministry is conveyed through the constitutional action of the Christian society. What precise form that constitutional action may take has not been prescribed in advance by Christ; nor, so far as we can learn, was it determined by the apostles; nor, as we know from the extant memorials of the early ages, was it then everywhere the same; nor, as later experience assures us, has



it permanently conformed to one type ; but, though the forms have varied, and will vary with the changing circumstances of men's life, yet the principle will remain inexorably the same. There can be no Christian ministry without a divine vocation ; and "the only evidence within our cognizance" of that divine vocation is "the fact that the minister is called according to a divinely-appointed order."<sup>1</sup> The Twenty-third Article of the Church of England justly expresses the teaching of the New Testament, the witness of Christian history, and the demand of right reason : "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." The cumbrous and balanced language of the article shows, what the practice of the Church of England at the time of its drafting, and for long afterwards, abundantly proves, that there was no purpose of tying down the whole Church to the episcopal government, which, for good and sufficient reasons, the English reformers determined to maintain. How strong those reasons were no student of Christian history will be disposed to question : the well-known assertion of the preface to the ordinal—in spite of a certain, perhaps inevitable, exaggeration—is capable, as Bishop Lightfoot showed to demonstration, of historical proof, though the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Lightfoot's *Christian Ministry*, p. 267.

whole testimony of history in the early ages disallows the exclusive claim, plausibly but illogically based on that assertion: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church: bishops, priests, and deacons." No candid and cultivated member of a non-episcopal church will resent the tenacity with which we cling to the only form of ecclesiastical order which stands in visible connection with the age of the apostles. No sympathetic and thoughtful man will wholly fail to understand the enthusiasm, which found such noble expression from the lips of Dean Church in his great sermon on "The Place of the Episcopate in Christian History," preached in this pulpit thirty-two years ago. "The episcopate," he said, "has these two things: it has a history inextricably associated with that of Christianity; and next, it is a public sign of community of origin and purpose, and an assertion, never faltering, of confidence in a continuing future. Other organisations have with more or less success kept up Christianity; but they date from particular times, and belong to particular places, and are the growth of special circumstances. Only this has been everywhere, where Christianity has been; only this belongs peculiarly to Christianity as a whole."<sup>1</sup>

2. The Christian ministry, standing in the succession of the apostles, has the same essential character. It is not, in the usual sense of the phrase, a sacerdotal ministry, and the most unfortunate results necessarily

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Paschal and Other Sermons*, p. 105

followed from the early and natural transference of Mosaic nomenclature to Christian ministers. Almost from the first the language implied and strengthened an utterly un-Christian way of regarding the ministry. The late Archbishop Benson's summary of S. Cyprian's doctrine will illustrate my point very usefully, for it was S. Cyprian who not only "crowned the edifice of episcopal power," but also was "the first to put forward without relief or disguise these sacerdotal assumptions; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them, that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language."<sup>1</sup>

"For him," says Archbishop Benson, "the bishop is the sacrificing priest. Christ was Himself the ordainer of the Jewish priesthood. The priests of that line were 'our predecessors.' The Jewish priesthood at last became 'a name and a shade,' on the day when it crucified Christ. Its reality passed on to the Christian bishop: each congregation (diocese) is 'the congregation of Israel'; the election of the bishop in their presence is made in accordance with the Law of Moses; the lapsed or sinful bishop is prohibited from sacrificing by the Mosaic statute against uncleanness: his communicants are tainted by his sin. The presbyterate is the Levitic tribe, exempt from worldly office, debarred from worldly callings, living on the offerings of the people, as their predecessors on the tithes, devoted day and night to sacrifice and prayer. So precise is the application, that the people are to rise at their coming in pursuance of the Levitic direction."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Lightfoot, *l.c.* p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Cyprian, p. 34.

Now this conception of a ministry, succeeding to the sacrificial functions and perpetuating the sacerdotal character of the Jewish priesthood, is obviously and utterly opposed to the apostolic conception. Their ministry was pre-eminently a "ministry of the word": the presbyters, over whom S. Timothy was placed, were to be specially honoured if they "laboured in the word and in teaching." The first duty of the Christian ministry is to cherish inviolate and constantly deliver the truth revealed in Jesus Christ to His chosen apostles. Search the pastoral epistles from end to end there is no trace of sacerdotalism in them, though they are "*the locus classicus* in the New Testament on the subject of the Christian ministry."<sup>1</sup>

3. Necessarily, in the wake of faithful preaching, follows the situation out of which the pastoral character of the apostolic ministry arises. I need not remind you that in both its great branches, moral discipline and the administration of the sacraments, this pastoral ministry draws its authority from the Gospel. As a pastor, emphatically, the Christian minister answers to S. Paul's description. He is a "minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God." S. Peter, in a memorable passage, associates the elders or presbyters of the Asian churches with his own ministry, and places both in relation with the supreme ministry of Christ Himself. It is the "*locus classicus*" on the subject of pastoral duty. "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the

<sup>1</sup> Vide Gore, *Church and Ministry*, p. 242.

flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God: nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." Such is the ministerial ideal drawn by an apostle's hand. How it mocks selfish lives and feeble faith! Set it beside the ministry of Christian history, of contemporary experience, and how eloquent it is of censure and shame! "Who is sufficient for these things?" Who, indeed? Yet the Christian ministers of later ages may echo the words of S. Paul: "Our sufficiency is of God"; and as we look back across the ages of Christian history, and around on the tumultuous life of our own time, surely we find abundant authentication of the words. Two facts about the Christian ministry stand out with luminous clearness. On the one hand, the incalculably great evils which flow from its corruption: on the other, the rare moral beauty with which it has enriched discipleship. The necessity of the ministry might be deduced from this circumstance that apart from its healthy working the Church of Christ languishes, or perishes altogether. Despise it if you will: heap ridicule upon it: deny its claims: dispute its value: you cannot escape from the fact that upon it depends the well-being of Christianity. The clergy are, and always have been, the unfailing indicators of the Church's spiritual health. What the clergy are, that the Church will become. Alas! that the failures should have been so many: the scandals so gross

and so obdurate! They who bear the Lord's commission may well bend their heads in shame and confusion of face as they recall the iniquities of the past, and the treasons of the present. Again and again, by their pride, their ambition, their rivalries, their corruptions, they have made the Lord's people to transgress. But there has been another side to the record of the Christian ministry. The Church counts among the saints and martyrs many, very many, of the Lord's ambassadors: saintly priests, learned divines, missionaries aflame with holy zeal, pastors who laid down their lives for their flocks, far-sighted prelates guiding the Church in difficult times. Nor has the apostolic succession ceased. Sometimes from scenes of holy toil, without recognition and without reward, as the world counts, from self-forgetting pastorates, carried on in solitary hamlets and in the crowded ghettos of the wretched, year in and year out under the chilling bitterness of poverty and neglect, the splendid devotion of the Christian ministry startles the world. No conflict stirs about this apostolic succession of service and suffering, for the commissioning Cross of Christ shines apparent upon it, and everywhere men's hearts bend in homage before it, and their consciences endorse its claim.

## HOLY COMMUNION.

*Preached on the 4th Sunday in Advent, December 22nd, 1901,  
in Westminster Abbey.*

THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS, IS IT NOT A COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK, IS IT NOT A COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST? SEEING THAT WE, WHO ARE MANY, ARE ONE BREAD, ONE BODY: FOR WE ALL PARTAKE OF THE ONE BREAD.—I *Corinthians* x. 16, 17.

THE Holy Communion is both the perpetual witness to the social aspect of Christ's religion, and the perpetual protest against Christian divisions. These functions of the sacrament are not, I think, disputed by any section of the Christian society, and least of all by the Church of England. The liturgy constantly dwells on the unifying influence of the sacrament. Nothing could exceed the pathos and solemnity with which the Churchman is assured that uncharity in all its forms is deeply repugnant to the essential character of Holy Communion. Take, for example, the prayer for "the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth": from beginning to end the note of Christian unity is sounding. On the threshold of the service we are compelled to lift our minds above the narrow fellowships of country or denomination, and fill our hearts with the great fact of "the universal Church." The language seems designed

to prohibit all conventional limitations of the Christian name. What could be more widely inclusive than this: "Grant that all they that do confess Thy holy Name may agree in the truth of Thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love"? We pray with absolute impartiality of Christian regard for "all Christian kings, princes, and governors"; indeed, the word "all" is the very keynote of the prayer, in which it occurs no less than nine times." We pray broadly for all God's people; we implore His goodness for "all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity." We bless His holy Name for "all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear," and ask that we may have grace "so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom." The exhortations to the communicants, or rather to those who ought to be communicants, are conceived in the same spirit. Not a word is said about the conventional shibboleths of denominational orthodoxy, but the utmost emphasis is laid upon reconciliation with alienated neighbours, restitution for injuries, forgiveness of injuries, not being in malice, and the like; and when the first part of the communion service is ended, and the communicants are summoned to come forward for the sacrament, the same prevailing note is audible in the words of summons. Here also there is nothing that divides, nothing that alienates, nothing that calls back to mind the occasions of denominational conflict. The appeal has behind it the force of the general Christian conscience in all ages, and goes home to the conscience



of every individual believer. Here are conditions of communion which wake no bitterness and work no injustice, and (such is the limitless and inscrutable folly of Christian folk) seem to command no attention : "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways ; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort ; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees."

I must not dwell longer on this alluring feature of the English' liturgy, but it is very requisite that I should press it earnestly on your consideration, now that I am trying to persuade you to see that the Holy Sacrament is properly the witness and the cement of Christian fellowship, and may become the sacred instrument by which the shattered unity of Christ's disciples may be re-created. Whatever obstacles there may be of another kind to that inter-communion with the non-episcopal Churches for which I have called you to labour, there are absolutely none in the communion service itself ; nor can there be imagined a more genuinely catholic definition of the Christian society than that which the communion service offers, and which was so often on the lips of Dean Stanley. It is hard indeed to reconcile with conventional Anglican theory, and harder still to reconcile with current Anglican practice, the language of the familiar thanksgiving in the Prayer-book : "Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank Thee . . . that we are very members incorporate

in the mystical body of Thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people!"

When we turn from the authorized forms of Anglican worship to the unauthorized but widely popular hymns, which have come to hold so prominent a place in the public service of the modern Church, we find that the unifying character of Holy Communion is still strongly pressed. There is, for example, a hymn constantly sung at celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, which has as the refrain of every verse save the last the words, "Through this blest sacrament of unity." The first verse is directly addressed to Christ:—

"Thou, Who at Thy first Eucharist didst pray  
That all Thy Church might be for ever one,  
Grant us at every Eucharist to say,  
With longing heart and soul, 'Thy will be done.'  
Oh, may we all one bread, one body be,  
Through this blest sacrament of unity."

But, while there are many such affirmations of the social aspect of the Holy Communion, yet, speaking broadly, it is the case that the modern Church has to a great degree magnified other aspects of the sacrament to the partial obscuring of this, which is the oldest aspect of all. If it were needful to offer proof of this statement, I should point to two deeply and darkly suggestive facts—the exaggeration of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist within the Western Church, an exaggeration so extreme that the reception of the sacrament has wholly ceased so far as the chalice is concerned among the laity, and for the rest become for the most part of them an act of religion

performed perhaps once or twice in the year, and at certain great occasions in life. This is one fact. The other, testifying, as I judge, to no less calamitous perversion, is the degradation which has overtaken the sacrament within the Protestant sphere, a degradation which has proceeded to such lengths that all sense of the unique and sovereign character of Christ's institution seems to have perished from many minds altogether, and this generation has witnessed the portentous spectacle of a numerous and enthusiastic Christian denomination actually leaving the two sacraments wholly out of its organisation. I refer, of course, to the well-known case of the Salvation Army, which officially admits neither baptism nor the supper of the Lord. The solitary masses of the Western Church and the official ignoring of the sacraments among the followers of "General" Booth unite in my view as consequences of one and the same fundamental misconception of the Holy Communion. Its essential character as the sacrament of unity has perished from mind. As we reascend the stream of Christian history, and approach the sources, we find this aspect of the Eucharist becoming even more prominent. The distinctive elements of the primitive Eucharist are all significant of fraternity. Let me but mention five.

1. It is certain that at first "the Lord's Supper" was a term of wider meaning than is now the case. It included the sacred feast known even within the apostolic age as the Agape, as well as the solemn commemoration of Christ's death in the sacrament of His Body and Blood. Now, the Agape was emphatically

an assertion of fraternity, and its intimate association with the Eucharist was at once the evidence and the security of the social aspect of Christ's institution. The very name is eloquent. Agape is, as you all know, the Greek word for "love": and its application to the Christian meal undoubtedly arose from the circumstance that, at the last supper, Christ had laid on His disciples as His "new commandment" the duty of mutual love.<sup>1</sup>

The separation of the Agape from the Eucharist was rendered advisable by the licentious abuses to which it too easily lent itself among the converts from heathenism. Dean Stanley conjectured that the severe language of S. Paul, in rebuking the excesses of the Corinthians, was the cause of the subsequent severance of the Sacrament from the social feast.<sup>2</sup>

More probably the persecuting action of the Roman government compelled what the wiser Christians felt to be a prudent course. Whatever the cause, the fact is beyond question that "by the end of the second or beginning of the third century the Agape, as a distinctive ceremony, seems to have been in vogue in East and West alike."<sup>3</sup>

There are few more melancholy studies than that of the history of the Agape, unless, perhaps, it be that of the history of the Eucharist. Severed from its association with the Sacrament, the fraternal feast rapidly degenerated, until it has reached our own days only in the degrading custom, still holding its ground among our poorest people, of the funeral "wake." Severed

<sup>1</sup> Vide Keating : *Agape and Eucharist*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Commentary on Epistles to the Corinthians*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> Vide Keating, *l.c.* p. 163.

from its association with the Agape, the sacrament rapidly lost its social function, and tended more and more to take a mysterious, sacrificial character, which among semi-barbarous peoples, in times of general ignorance, fell in but too easily with deep-seated and prevailing superstition.

2. Take, again, the apostolic custom of giving the "kiss" of Christian fellowship in the Christian assembly. "Salute one another with a holy kiss" is an exhortation which occurs in no fewer than four of St. Paul's Epistles, and it would be impossible to find a more emphatic assertion of fraternity. The "kiss of peace" seems to have found a place in all the principal religious ceremonies of the early Christians, but "the Holy Eucharist is the Christian rite with which it was most essentially connected, and in which it was preserved the longest. It is found in all primitive liturgies, and is mentioned or referred to by the earliest writers who describe the administration of the Lord's Supper."<sup>1</sup>

Whether, as seems to have been the earlier practice, the kiss was given before the consecration, or whether, as has been the general rule of the West, it followed the consecration, its signification was the same. S.<sup>c</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem explained its meaning to his catechumens in the year 347 in his lecture on the mysteries, to which by baptism they were about to be admitted.

"Then," he said, referring to the order of the accustomed Liturgy, "the deacon cries aloud, 'Receive ye one another; and let us kiss one another.' Think not that this kiss ranks with those given in public by

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Dict. of Christian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 903.

common friends. It is not such: this kiss blends souls one with another, and solicits for them entire forgiveness. Therefore this kiss is that our souls are mingled together, and have banished all remembrance of wrongs. For this cause Christ said, 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift upon the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' The kiss, therefore, is reconciliation, and for this reason holy as the blessed Paul has in his epistles urged, 'Greet ye one another with a holy kiss'; and Peter, 'with a kiss of charity.'"<sup>1</sup>

Of course it could not last: as the Church grew numerous and fashionable, the simple domestic practices of the first days had to be laid aside. We know, by many lamentable examples, how readily the innocent liberty of one age becomes, in the desecrating hands of unspiritual men, the scandalous license of another. I do not recall the primitive simplicity in order to urge its revival, but as one more eloquent token of the character which, in those early times, was ascribed to the Holy Communion.

3. Consider, again, the suggestive custom of the early Church, which stands out clearly in the earliest post-apostolic accounts of the Eucharist which we possess. I mean the practice of sending the consecrated elements to those members of the Church who, for some reason or other, were absent from the general service.

"Justin tells us that it was part of the deacons' office to carry the eucharistic elements to those who were not

<sup>1</sup> *Catechetical Lectures*, xxiii.

present, implying that this was done at the direction of the president. This was not only, we may suppose, in the case of those hindered by sickness, but as a token of love to those who were otherwise prevented from attending; it might be by reason of work, as, for instance, to slaves; it might be to prisoners; it might be to clergy or laity as a sign of communion."<sup>1</sup> The practice, as we know, rapidly degenerated into gross superstition; but its underlying idea was essentially Christian. The words of S. Paul express that idea with luminous terseness: "We, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread." So profoundly impressed were those early Christians with the social aspect of Holy Communion, that they could not easily acquiesce in the absence, even for an adequate reason, of one single Christian from the unifying Sacrament.

4. To the same effect was the primitive insistence upon one celebration of the Eucharist in the local church. The celebrated passages in the Ignatian Epistles give extravagant and ecstatic but none the less impressive expression to the writer's conviction that the Eucharist is the pre-eminent bond of Christian unity, and that, if Eucharists be multiplied in any local church, there must inevitably follow some weakening of the sense of fraternity in Christ. The blessed martyr is not thinking of the formal conditions which may be held requisite to the "validity" of the sacrament, but he is writing in view of a pressing danger; with his eye on notorious facts. It was actually the case in the churches of Asia Minor that the bishop's Eucharist was the bond of oneness, and

<sup>1</sup> Vide Bishop Wordsworth's *The Holy Communion*, pp. 115, 116.

separation therefrom was the effect of a schismatic spirit. "Be ye careful therefore," he writes to the Philadelphians, "to observe one Eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup unto union in His blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons my fellow-servants), that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it after God."<sup>1</sup> S. Ignatius is not advancing a case for any specific form of church order as against any other; he is concerned with combating an urgent practical danger. "Heresies are rife; schisms are imminent. To avert these dangers loyalty to church rulers is necessary." And the unifying action of those rulers becomes most evident in connection with the sacrament of unity.<sup>2</sup>

5. Consider, further, the eloquent fact that from the first Christians have associated almsgiving with the Eucharist. The multiplication of "collections" at all kinds of services has, I fear, tended to weaken in our minds the original witness of that association. The "offertory" at the Holy Communion is a standing evidence of the social aspect of that Divine sacrament. See how the notion of fraternity everywhere emerges from the account of the Eucharist which S. Justin wrote about the middle of the second century. Can you imagine a more alluring combination of reverent order and brotherly freedom than he describes?

"On the so-called day of the sun there is a meeting of all of us who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets

<sup>1</sup> c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Lightfoot: *Apostolic Fathers*, Part II. vol. ii. p. 396 f.



are read, as long as time allows. Then when the reader has ceased, the president gives by word of mouth his admonition and exhortation to follow these excellent things. Afterwards we all rise at once and offer prayers; and . . . when we have ceased to pray, bread is brought and wine and water, and the president likewise offers up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his power, and the people assents with its Amen. Then follows the distribution to each and the partaking of that for which thanks were given; and to them that are absent a portion is sent by the hand of the deacons. Of those that are well-to-do and willing, every one gives what he will, according to his own purpose, and the collection is deposited with the president, and he it is that succours orphans and widows, and those that are in want through sickness or any other cause, and those that are in bonds, and the strangers that are sojourning, and in short he has the care of all that are in need."<sup>1</sup>

I do not forget that we are living at the beginning of the twentieth century when I thus rehearse to you the simple practice of the second. I know that we might as well insist upon returning to the upper rooms and rude basilicas of that distant time as press for the exchange of our solemn, elaborated liturgies for the domestic simplicity of that primitive worship. But I am pointing out the fact, which everywhere Christians have forgotten, that the fraternal spirit of true discipleship did then find natural expression in the Eucharist, and I am leading you to the conclusion that by returning to fraternity in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide*, quoted in Gwatkin's *Selections*, p. 50.

our treatment of the sacrament we shall best serve the purpose of Christian unity.

If, leaving the witness even of the earliest church, we turn to the sacrament itself, all that has been said receives solemn ratification. The more we ponder over the Holy Communion, and recall the circumstances of its institution, and regard the associations inseparably bound about it by the Divine Master Himself, the more impressed we must become by the scandal of our religious divisions. The Holy Communion comes to us directly from the heart of the mystery of our redemption, and testifies, with an eloquence which can never lose its force, of the passion of Jesus. Act and word combine to carry the most moving appeal for unity which the Christian heart can receive. By unmistakable symbols and hallowed words the whole pageant of Calvary is brought before us. We are in presence of that hill of infamy where

“ . . . a stern symbol rises from the rock,  
The Cross of Roman Syria grimly set,  
Leafless, dim-lit in leaden-colour'd dawn.”

We have come to the cross, the shrine of love ; we watch the Crucified, the Victim of love ; we listen to the seven words, the voices of love. An apostle, keeping the vigil of love on that accursed hill, whispers in our ears the lesson of the tragedy : “ Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us.” “ We love, because He first loved us.” But the Holy Communion is more than an august and tender memory, more even than an apocalypse of the Divine love ; it is, also, a heavenly mystery, in and through which the Incarnate

Son of God gives to His faithful and obedient servants the energising graces of His own life. S. Paul's words can mean no less; not the most ardent devotion can ask for more: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread." In S. Paul's view "the Holy Communion was not only the external sign by which the disciples of Christ might be recognized, but it conveyed the Divine life by which the individual disciples were united by a living bond with Jesus Christ." It sustained the mystic union with the Lord which holy Baptism had created. So necessarily the notion of the mystical body, the Church, passed into the notion of Christ Himself as, through the sacrament, bestowing His own life-giving presence, Christians became one body because they received one Divine life. The consecrated elements were seen to possess a more awful character. They conveyed to believing and obedient disciples the very life of the Lord; they were spiritually His body and His blood."<sup>1</sup>

I may assume that many, perhaps most, of my hearers are Christian folk. You are looking forward with devout ardour to the Festival of Christ's Nativity. Around you will gather dear ones from far and near, or you will yourself return once more to the loved precincts of your old home. You will, of course, take thought for the religious obligation of Christmas. The church bells

<sup>1</sup> I have substantially incorporated a paragraph from my book *Apostolic Christianity*, p. 160.

will ring out their summons, the churches will be decked, the altars made ready throughout the length and breadth of our old Christian land. Christ's table will be spread for His own, and His words of loving invitation will be spoken ; and then—you know it well—this portent and outrage will emerge : In thousands of English homes the mention of Holy Communion will bring to mind, not the deepest and holiest unity of all, but obstinate divisions ; nay, in many it will by tacit agreement be omitted as endangering the harmony of the household. Families will break up for the sacrament of unity ; and only reunite on the lower levels of natural relationships and conventional festivity. Is it possible to conceive a more piteous perversion ? Does it not degrade our Christmas fellowship into a hollow and futile form ? I have gained my purpose if my words shall stir in you a profound discontent, an immense sorrow at this lamentable distortion at which we English Christians have arrived at the end of thirteen centuries of national Christianity. I pray that the scandal of our shattered fellowship may be so burnt in on our consciences, as we receive the Holy Sacrament on Christ's birthday, that we shall pledge ourselves by solemn vow at the altar of God to take on our shoulders the cross of this high crusade, which battles not for the conquest of an empty tomb, but for the re-conquest of the living temple, the home of Christian fraternity, declared to the world once more as at the first, and sustained in the Church by the common receiving of the Lord's Supper by all the Lord's people. May the oldest of Eucharistic prayers be on our lips and in our hearts on Christmas

Day as we kneel at the communion rail: "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and, gathered together, became one, so let Thy Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom, for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."

## DISCIPLESHIP.

• *Preached on the Sunday after Christmas, December 29th, 1901,  
in Westminster Abbey.* •

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, YEA, AND  
FOR EVER.—*Hebrews xiii. 8.* •

ESSENTIAL Christianity must be original Christianity, Christianity as the Founder presented it, before the distorting, disintegrating influences of history had borne down upon it, before it had attracted to itself alien interests, and contracted compromising affinities, Christianity in the simplicity of its beginnings, in the unspotted purity of its new birth—in a word, the Christianity of Christ, and not the Christianity of Christendom. When we ask what original Christianity actually was, our appeal lies of necessity to the New Testament, and therein, primarily, to the Gospels. In those brief narratives, so brief that the whole of their contents would not fill a single file of the *Times*, we must find the answer to our question.

• I do not think it needful to undertake any defence of the authority which I thus attribute to the gospels. The critical conflicts of modern times—so far as I can appreciate their effect—appear to have established, so far as such conflicts could establish, the validity of the

claim which the evangelists make to present as faithful a version of the life of Jesus as the circumstances permitted. Personally, I am the more firmly convinced as I the more frequently study those sacred narratives that they set before us an honest history and a just presentation of the Author of Christianity. What, then, do these gospels certify to have been the character of original Christianity?

The answer is on the surface. Original Christianity was a discipleship to Jesus Christ. He claimed from men love, teachableness, self-surrender in obedience. He offered Himself as their Friend, their Teacher, and their Lord, and He built His expectation of their acceptance on the impression He had made on them by His life and doctrine. Living frankly in their midst, no distant figure girt with a halo of romance, but a familiar object in their daily experience, "the Son of Man came eating and drinking," mingling without reserve in the ordinary intercourse of human society. He invited them to study His character at short range, to consider His conduct in detail, to weigh His habitual conversation as well as His formal teachings, and so to come to a decision on His claim when in due time He proposed it to them. .

The followers of Christ are in the gospels commonly described as His "disciples." The evangelists are very jealous of the official title given to the twelve—"apostles." The most profound and spiritual of the four never uses it at all; it is most used by S. Luke, who personally stood farthest from the history, and the term itself expresses rather a function than an office, and the function implies discipleship.

Christ adopted the familiar method of Jewish teachers in making Himself the centre of a "school." As there was a "school" of Hillel, and a "school" of Shammah, so to the casual observer it looked as if there was coming on the scene a "school" of Jesus. His contemporaries contrasted Him with such well-known teachers, and dwelt suspiciously on His lack of the normal qualifications for the teacher's office. "Is not this the carpenter?" they asked in scorn. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" They set in contrast the well-authenticated position of Moses and the anomalous situation of the new Teacher. "We know that God hath spoken unto Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence He is." They perceived, moreover, that the discipleship which Christ claimed and commanded was very different from any which their greatest teachers could command. The personal pretensions of the Rabbi from Nazareth exceeded all precedent. Very early in Christ's career His hearers remarked that "He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Reading the gospel, we can understand their amazement. Christ was the most egotistic Teacher known to history. Familiarity, perhaps, hides from us the startling character of His utterances. Take for sufficient example, the Sermon on the Mount, which is sometimes spoken about as if it stood in some kind of opposition to the rest of the gospel. Consider the magnitude of the personal claim which the Speaker of that wonderful discourse advances. He tacitly assumes His own com-



petence, to revise the Mosaic law. The new morality needs no weightier sanction than His mere word. He remodels the law of marriage, declares positively the conditions on which sinners shall receive forgiveness at the hands of God, speaks of the heavenly Father with an assumption of plenary knowledge, attaches an awful gravity to the treatment which men give to His teachings, makes righteousness the very test of discipleship to Himself. Deity alone can satisfy His declarations and authenticate His assumptions.

Discipleship implied the frank acceptance of Christ's personal claims, and the power which won that acceptance was the power of Christ's personal influence. Our Lord rarely argued about Himself. His self-assertion was, for the most part, unmitigated by explanations. Men had to face it, so to say, in its natural difficulty. But this He did: He brought them into His own intimate society. He made them the companions of His daily life. He bade them know Him thoroughly, observe Him closely, criticize Him anxiously; and to these ends He placed them in habitual contact with Himself, and, on the basis of their intimate and protracted knowledge of Him, challenged their verdict of His personal claim: "Who say ye that I am?"

But what did discipleship practically involve? Obviously, at the time to those first disciples, peril, loss, temporal ruin. They did not see it. Probably, if they had seen the future that lay before them, they would not have found the courage to respond to Christ's appeal. They did not see it; but He saw it, and, with frankness of perfect honesty, set it before them.

Nothing could be sterner or more threatening than the prospect which He unfolded before His disciples. His own rejection, passion, death of ignominy would mean for them disappointment, opprobrium, danger. Yet, throughout, the note of Divine authority prevails: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that doth not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Times would change; they did change. So far as the world is concerned, discipleship would not involve trouble. Would, then, the "offence of the cross" have ceased? Surely not, for, in truth, the least part of the difficulty lay in the external sphere where violence is possible. It is in our own time, out of the midst of an ostentatiously religious society, that the cry has been heard, so full of perplexity and anguish:

"How very hard it is to be  
A Christian! Hard for you and me."

Discipleship goes deeper than the external circumstances of life. "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever." The terms of His service reflect His changelessness. His standpoints, His standards of value, His judgments remain, amid all revolutions of society, unalterable; and in the honest acceptance of these lies the essence of discipleship.

2. Discipleship is the abiding aspect of Christianity. Look at the facts. Christianity, regarded from the standpoints of the ecclesiastic and the theologian, has a

very unstable appearance. We are, indeed, very familiar with the claim that churches and creeds do not change. The human mind, pathetically conscious of its own infirmity, clings desperately to the delusion of changelessness. Persistently it claims for some ecclesiastical order or some theological system that it reproduces faithfully the institutions and doctrines of the Divine Founder. When the fact of novelty is too evident to be denied, refuge is taken in the notion of development. In this Church, or in that dogmatic system, alone must the founder's intention be recognised. Christendom is weary of the civil wars of Christians, in which every banner bears the proud device, "The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." There has come on the scene the one impartial and authoritative arbiter. Institutions and beliefs, churches and creeds, are forced to plead before the judgment seat of historical science. One result has been an extensive destruction of controversial assumptions. The Divine right of existing types of ecclesiastical order, and systems of theology—in so far as it rests on the claim, to perpetuate the founder's original arrangements—cannot survive the criticism of historical students. We know now that the Church of Christ received from the Divine Founder no rigid and articulated organisation, that neither the faith, nor the government, nor the discipline of the Christian society was defined in advance; that the apostles, to whom the task of founding the Church was given, were assured the presence of the guiding "Spirit of Truth," and sent out into the world to learn by experiment and failure the

right methods of organisation. Apart from this appeal to the past, our own observations might well convince us of the futility of the claim to changelessness. Everything is in process of change. Even if the same formularies and institutions are preserved, their meaning and functions change. It is an evident delusion to suppose that, in that way, the universal law can be avoided. We may, indeed, successfully guard against formal alterations of creed and system, but we cannot take effectual measures against the silent disintegration of time. The apparent changes do but inadequately represent the actual alteration. Regard Christianity from the ecclesiastical or theological standpoint, and it seems to me impossible to escape the fear that the doom of obsolescence which, sooner or later, overtakes all terrestrial organisations, will here also assert its power. Churches and creeds, as such, have no immunity from the law of change : but if the essence of Christianity be not the membership of a church, nor yet the acceptance of a system of belief, but, rather, discipleship to a living Person, then it seems possible to hope that Christianity may possess an indestructible life. For its "life is hid with Christ in God."

The religion of Christ will last precisely so long as Christ is able to command the hearts, intellects, and wills of men. Discipleship, in the common experience of mankind, terminates in one of two ways. On the one hand, the disciple may outstrip his teacher, learn all he has to teach, and advance into regions where he has no message. On the other hand, the disciple may lose confidence in the teacher, shake off the spell of his personal influence,

set himself free from his moral and intellectual control. Can either of these contingencies happen in the case of the Christian discipleship? Are there any signs that Christians have outgrown the teachings of the Master? Is the world growing weary of the ideal presented in the Gospel? As far as I can see, the evidence points in the opposite direction. Men are doubtful and sceptical about the Church; they suspect and dislike the clergy: they are impatient of theological systems: but for Jesus Christ, as He stands out to view in the sacred pages, as they dimly realise Him in their own best selves, as they catch faint traces of Him in the lives of His saints, they have no other sentiments than those of respect and affection. In the twentieth century He allures men as in the first, by the attraction of Himself. "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever."

3. The changes of Christianity which, at first sight, perplex and distress us, are not only intelligible, but even necessary, when Christianity is conceived as a discipleship. For discipleship must always include the notion of advance. In truth, not to advance is to cease to be a disciple. That is the best discipleship which, as time passes, enters ever more deeply into the Master's mind, assimilates more of the Master's teaching, and moves onward into a closer agreement with the Master's character. This is certainly true of the individual Christian. He advances slowly in spiritual knowledge, surrenders himself more completely to the government of the Divine Spirit, accepts more frankly the stand-points of Jesus, and so, by very gradual stages, and with

many backslidings, grows into the likeness of his Lord. Not otherwise is the case of the Christian society, the Body of Christ, the visible Church. There is through the centuries an advance in Christianity. The resources of the Gospel are drawn upon in the successive crises of Christian experience. The bearings of Christ's doctrine are slowly perceived. Every generation has its own problems; and in finding their solution in the Christian revelation, every generation finds out something more of Christ's message, and hands on the great Christian tradition, enriched and extended. It is manifest that there can be no finality in the sphere of organisation and formulated doctrine, for these have reference to conditions of life and thought, which are constantly changing. In these respects, the past cannot give law to the present, for the very obvious and sufficient reason that the needs of the present are not the same as the needs of the past, and the whole circumstances are different.

Certainly if, abandoning all formal notions of ecclesiastical continuity and all rigid theories of theological uniformity, we regard the history of Christianity as the long-drawn-out probation of discipleship, it seems to me that we gather comfort and confidence. Consider what amazing fortunes have been experienced by the religion of Jesus. I can find no parallel in the religious history of mankind. Christianity has mastered the two highest human civilisations. The "seed of God" was cast into the very midst of classical society in the heart of its golden age: it seemed predestined to rapid extinction or to an utter sterility. The gospel of a crucified Messiah revolted the Jews: the revelation of a suffering

Deity scandalized the Greeks: the severity of its moral demand alienated the Orientals: the homage it paid to weakness—the woman and the child—moved the laughter of the imperial race. It seemed to have at the time no recommendations whatever. Looking back, with the commentary of many centuries to guide us, we can see what at the time was not seen, that, unknown to themselves, Jew and Greek, Oriental and Roman were blindly groping after that which Christianity was actually offering. At the time, however, so extreme seemed the aversion which the Gospel provoked, that an inspired apostle could only describe it in the terms of an audacious paradox: “The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Then befell the mightiest ruin of all history, that downfall of the Roman Empire, which has been not excessively described as “the foundering of a world.” Christianity faced the barbarians of the North in the flush of victory, in the exasperation of conflict. Christ’s personal influence was never more potent:

“And centuries came and ran their course,  
And unspent all that time  
Still, still went forth that Child’s dear force  
And still was at its prime.”

Under its spell our rude ancestors passed, and became the artificers of a nobler civilisation than that which they wrecked—the civilisation of modern Christendom. Pass on to the sixteenth century, when the mediæval church, over-weighted with its corruptions, fell with a violence and suddenness which shook the very bases of society. All the time-honoured securities of Christian faith and

morals seemed to have been finally abandoned. Yet the ruin did not come. The New Testament, rising, as it were suddenly from centuries of neglect, took the place of the discredited Church tradition. The Founder came nearer to men again, and His personal influence refounded Christianity. The sixteenth century witnessed the downfall of exaggerated ecclesiasticism; the nineteenth witnessed the downfall of exaggerated dogmatism. We gaze with wonder at the mass of dead literature which cumber the shelves of our libraries, and attests the polemical ardour of our Protestant forefathers. In this holocaust of systems and shibboleths again the miracle is renewed. The Founder stands out again in more marked prominence, and draws to Himself a more ample homage. "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever."

4. Finally, it is in realising our Christian profession as before all things a discipleship to Jesus Christ that we shall recover fraternity. The nearer we draw to our Master, the nearer we draw also to one another. The two relationships are inseparable. Perfect discipleship implies perfect fraternity. So He said, "Ore is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren." Discipleship is not destructive of church membership, only it discovers the link of union not in any external agreement or discipline, but in a common allegiance to a living Lord. It lies on the surface of the Gospel that Christ contemplated the organisation of His disciples; and the visible Church, with its ministry, sacraments and discipline, is unquestionably His creation; indeed, the visible Church is a practical necessity if the mission of Christ is to be



perpetuated in the world : but with all this the primary truth remains, that the basis of union and the essence of religion does not lie in the social organisation but in the personal relationship.

If, as disciples, we approach the matters that now divide us from one another, how extraordinarily petty they appear ! The late Bishop Creighton, in his primary charge, asserted his belief that we Anglicans are ready to co-operate with all other Christians for purposes which we have in common.<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, that be the case, intercommunion with the non-episcopal churches ought not to be a distant or an unpleasing prospect.

What other purpose, which disciples of Jesus Christ have in common, can vie in importance with that of which I spoke in the first sermon of the course which is ending to-day, obedience to His "new commandment." In truth, wherever Christians are forced back on discipleship, they cannot refrain themselves from confessing their brotherhood in the Holy Communion. In front of the heathen, the intercommunion for which I have pleaded is already an accomplished fact, wherever the issue is directly raised. "Yesterday," wrote that illustrious missionary, Bishop French, "I turned my little sitting-room here into a chapel and had ten worshippers—prayers, sermon, and Holy Communion, to which seven stayed, mostly Presbyterians, whom I could not possibly exclude. These dear, good American missionaries and professors will sit much nearer to the Lamb at His supper table, I believe, than I shall, and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide The Church and the Nation*, p. 35.

I should blush if admitted there, to think that I had warned them off the eucharistic table on earth.”<sup>1</sup> Some of us were privileged to hear from this pulpit on the Saturday afternoons in Advent luminous and profoundly interesting addresses on foreign missions from another missionary bishop, a worthy disciple of Bishop French. He spoke with generous appreciation of the heroic pioneers of missionary enterprise in the far East—of Xavier the Jesuit, of Schwartz the Lutheran, of Cary the Baptist. The latter he declared to be the founder of modern Indian missions. I do not think Bishop Mylne will resent my repeating here a snort dialogue which we exchanged after the service. “Is it not strange, my Lord,” I said, “that the schismatic should loom so large in your record?” “Ah,” he replied, “in the mission field we have to take a very broad view of things.” “Do you not think, my Lord,” I rejoined, “that it is about time we domesticated that broad view here at home?” And this, in short, is the proposition that I have defended before you in ten successive sermons. Is it not high time for us Anglicans to bring our formal theory into line with our actual practice, and to make both express our genuine convictions? That is the question which I have offered to my fellow-Churchmen at the opening of the twentieth century in this great Church: that is the challenge I have thrown down. I have counted the cost; I know well that, to borrow the words of Dr. Salmon, “when thoughtful men are anxious to retire from untenable positions, the uneducated imagine that a cowardly surrender of truth

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Life*, vol. ii. p. 273.

has been made.”<sup>1</sup> I have lived long enough to know by experience the malignant force of bigotry and the persistent calumny of fanaticism, but I do not repent me of my course. My conscience is clear, my conviction strong. I say with Bishop French, “It is the infinite concern which I have for Christ and His blessed truth and Church, which makes me eschew soft utterances at some moments of almost desperation at the way in which the regiments within the Christian army—those who have the same devotion to the King and His Bride—set to work fighting each other and riddling the allied ranks with grape-shot and worse, instead of charging with one heart and soul the common foe.” And I make appeal with confidence to the consciences of all those in all the churches which bear Christ’s honourable Name, who feel the shame and weakness of our present state, and are ready to make some effort and even some sacrifice, to recover the lost fraternity of Christ’s disciples.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Cathedral and University Sermons*, p. 178.





